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The ISTC is the United Kingdom's professional association for technical authors, technical illustrators, and information designers.

ISTC Office: PO Box 522, Peterborough, PE2 5WX, UK. Tel: 01733 390141 Email: istc AT istc.org.uk
Web: <http://www.istc.org.uk/>

This Newsletter is published monthly and is emailed to anyone who wishes to subscribe. As well as ISTC news, the Newsletter aims to cover anything of interest to the profession. Currently about 1500 people subscribe. To subscribe, contact the Office.

Advertising: [Felicity Davie](#) or phone 01344 466600
Editorial: [Newsletter Editor](#)

Newsletters are posted at <http://www.istc.org.uk/site/newsletters.asp>. If you're reading a printed copy of this newsletter and want to explore the links mentioned, go there and open or download a copy.

Oxford online trial

The ISTC is trialling a possible new member benefit, access to the Oxford Reference Online (ORO). This would include access via a page in the members' section of the ISTC website to **30** reference works in the following categories:

- English dictionaries and thesauruses, eg *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*
- English language reference, eg *The Oxford Dictionary of English Grammar*
- general reference, eg *World Encyclopedia*
- computing, eg *A Dictionary of Computing* and *A Dictionary of the Internet*
- science, eg *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Mathematics*
- economics and business, eg *A Dictionary of Business* and *A Dictionary of Finance and Banking*
- literature, eg *The Concise Oxford Companion to English Literature*

More information is available from [Oxford Reference Online](#), including a tour and a [full list of titles](#).

ORO have given members of the ISTC Discussion Group free trial access until the

end of November.

The cost to an individual for the full Reference collection would be £175+VAT per year. Were the ISTC to go ahead, the cost would be about £3.50 per member per year for a package of the 30 most appropriate works. As your membership subscriptions are tax deductible, the actual cost would be slightly less.

The ISTC Discussion Group members who have tried it and expressed an opinion have generally been enthusiastic.

If you are an **ISTC member** and would like to try out the ORO, apply to join the [ISTC Discussion Group](#). The message announcing the trial is number 3648. If you need more information contact [Marian Newell](#).

Remember, you have until the end of the month to try it out.

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Jobs, jobs, jobs

VACANCIES

[TMS Publications Limited](#) have immediate positions for permanent staff at their Grantham, Lincolnshire offices.

TECHNICAL ILLUSTRATOR – minimum 2 years' experience in Adobe Illustrator/Photoshop and Iledo Isodraw.

MULTIMEDIA DEVELOPER – minimum 2 years' experience in Macromedia Authorware plus Storyboarding experience.

Experience in additional software tools an advantage.

E-mail Tom Nicholas at tnicholas@tmsp.co.uk and attach your CV.

Agency profile – Alanti

Many of you who've been to Conference over the years will remember Technology Assignments, who often sponsored Conference events. Despite keeping a lower profile of late, they live on as Alanti.

Alanti are a combination of documentation house, recruitment agency, and Information Mapping trainers (in partnership with [Information Mapping Europe](#)).

Their site includes a [vacancies page](#) and [jobs by email](#).

Contact details

Address: Lutidine House, Newark Lane, Ripley, Surrey, GU23 6BS

Switchboard : +44 (0)1483 270230

Fax: +44 (0)1483 270231

Email: info@alanti.co.uk

Web: <http://www.alanti.co.uk/index.php>

VACANCIES

In-House Technical Writers

For the [Crestec](#) offices in Japan we are currently looking for in-house technical writers.

Applicants should be native speakers of English.

The positions concern technical writing, mainly dealing with manuals in the field of motorcycle, automotive, office equipment and printer software.

The tasks include writing Owner's Manuals and Service Manuals as well as some editing work, including adaptation of previous English materials.

Some knowledge of Japanese is desirable.

The contract being offered is for the duration of one year with the possibility to renew each year.

All expenses for the move to Japan will be refunded. The company will make sure there is an apartment waiting and help with all necessary arrangements.

The basic salary (approx. 200,000 Yen gross) will be increased with a special allowance, including overtime payment (approx. 30,000 Yen gross) and the payment of the rent (max. 50,000 Yen).

Holidays include the standard (approx. 119 days/year) as well as 10 days vacation in the first year (after working 6 months) and then increases with 1 day/year for each year.

For more information regarding the position, salary, etc., please contact Mrs. A. Kroeders at [Crestec Amsterdam B.V.](#) (a.kroeders@crestec.nl)

ISTC News

London Area Group meetings

The ISTC's London Area Group has set its meeting dates for 8 January, 11 March, 13 May, 8 July, and so on. That's the second Thursday of the 'odd' months.

The programme will be posted on the [Area Groups page](#), where you can get the most up-to-date information.

All members who live or work in and around the London area are welcome to join. Non-members are also welcome to come along and sample the ISTC's delights.

ISTC Office

The office will be closed for the Christmas holidays from Monday 22 December and will re-open on Monday 5 January 2004.

Membership renewals

The invoice for your 2004 membership will start to go out soon. If you've changed your address or contact details since last year, please let Carol know before 27 November.

You may also like to think about upgrading your membership. If you've been an Associate for a while, then you may now qualify to be a Member. Similarly, Members may qualify to become Fellows.

Next Communicator

The next *Communicator* should reach members and subscribers just before Christmas. For the many Newsletter readers who haven't quite got round to joining the ISTC yet, here's some of what you'll be missing. To join, see the Office contact details on the front page.

Rights: yours or your clients? – Exploring intellectual property and copyright law
Andrew Taylor

The state of Help today – Looking at the Help formats of yesterday and tomorrow
Justin Darley

RoboHelp X4 for single sourcing – Explaining new conditional content functionality and output formats
Greg Daffern

User and assembly instructions – Using graphics to support, or sometimes replace, text in instructions
Sandra Jansen

Veredus 1.0 enters the fray – Reviewing Rascal Software's new XML-based help authoring tool
Michael Plant

So, you think you know Information Mapping? (part 2 of 3) – Demonstrating the practical benefits of the method in use
Paul Ballard

Better screen captures (part 2 of 2) – Explaining how to enhance screen captures for print and online use

Charles Cowan and **Alan Beasley**

Word workshop follow-up – Suggesting solutions to problems raised by Conference delegates

Adrian Young and **Margaret Aldis**

Plus the regular features such as hints for writers, tools of the trade, international standards, and translation.

Newsletter and Adobe Reader

Following a survey in many of last month's mailings, the Newsletter will stay in PDF 1.3 format for a while yet. Several of your employers are still using Acrobat 4 with no prospect of their upgrading.

For those of you who can and want to upgrade, go to the [Acrobat Reader UK home page](#). The [system requirements](#) page seems to show that everyone who can use Reader 4.0 can use 5.0. Many of you should be able to use 6.0. You can download Acrobat Reader from the [Download](#) page. By selecting your operating system from the list, you can see what the latest version you can use is.

If you can use 6.0 but don't want the nuisance of a download, then computer magazines at your newsagents may have Acrobat Reader 6.0 on their CD-ROMs. Check inside the magazine first to see what's on the disc.

Events

November

- 19–20 [European Information Development Conference](#). Wiesbaden, Germany. Mainly in English. Linked to tekcom Conference listed next. See the [tekcom newsletter](#) for more information.
- 19–21 [tekcom Autumn Conference](#). Wiesbaden. Mainly in German.
- 20–21 [Techshare 2003](#). Birmingham. RNIB conference on the role of technology in the everyday life of people with sight problems.
- 20–21 [Translating and the Computer 25](#). Commonwealth Institute, London
- 24–26 [Structured Technical Information in the Defence Community](#). Wyboston, Cambridgeshire.
- 25–27 [Digital Print World 2003](#). London

December

- 2–4 [Online Information](#) and [Content Management Europe](#). London
- 9 [Future of Online Help](#): Technologies, tools and trends in online user assistance. [British Computer Society West London Branch](#). Greenford.

January 2004

- 8 [ISTC London Area Group](#).
- 22–24 [Document Design Conference 2004](#). [Tilburg University](#), Tilburg, The Netherlands.

March

- 11 [ISTC London Area Group](#).
- 29 [4th European colloquium for user-friendly product information](#). Brussels

Looking way ahead

The [IEEE Professional Communication Society](#) is planning to cross the pond in 2005 for their International Professional Communication Conference. It will be held at the University of Limerick, Ireland in July 2005. The IEEE PCS appears to have mastered time travel as the programme includes an “authentic medieval banquet”. See their [IPCC 2005 site](#) for details.

Careering towards stardom

ISTC member Mike Unwalla got famous last month. Dr Unwalla, a Fellow of the ISTC, recorded a short video to demonstrate the life of a technical writer to students considering a career in the field. But it didn't unfortunately stretch to 15 minutes of fame as per Andy Warhol's saying.

[CASCAiD](#), a company that provides career guidance material to students, recorded Mike carrying out typical tasks for a technical writer and also explaining his job (he is Principal Technical writer at [TechScribe](#)).

CASCAiD research a myriad of different careers and Mike generously responded to a post on the ISTC Discussion Group list requesting help. He was able to supply an overview of a freelancer's job, at the same time, ensuring technical writers of the future got a true picture of the career. Modestly, Mike said as much himself: “It's a great privilege to be able to represent the technical writing community. I hope my participation encourages young people to consider the important role that they could be playing in the technological society of the future”.

CASCAiD is part of [Loughborough University](#) and provides career guidance software to over 80% of secondary schools in the UK.

Mike has been a technical writer for eight years and a freelancer for four of those years.

A web quality version of the video can be seen at [Mike's site](#).

Training courses

Listings are restricted to scheduled courses that are low cost or are in some way unusual. For training in, say, Adobe products, or for organisations that provide bespoke training, you'll one day be pointed to a new edition of the ISTC's guide, [Technical Communications: A Guide To Courses](#).

Course providers

[Cherryleaf](#). Tel: 01784 258672 Email: [info AT cherryleaf.com](mailto:info@cherryleaf.com)

[Oxon CE](#). (University of Oxford Continuing Education).
Email: [perdonaldev AT conted-ox.ac.uk](mailto:perdonaldev@conted-ox.ac.uk) Tel: 01865 286953

[SfEP](#) (Society for Editors and Proofreaders). Contact details vary from course to course. See the [programme](#) on their website.

[Sol](#) (Society of Indexers). Workshops Administrator: [Julie Miller](#),
Tel: 01229 464878 (preferably early evenings on weekdays)

[TCE Labs](#). Tel: +1 970 282 1868 Email: john@tcelabs.com

Weekend and evening courses, when identified, are in bold. Listings are a service to members. A listing does not imply ISTC endorsement.

General courses

[Audience Analysis and Usability Testing](#). Cherryleaf. 24 or 25/11

[Breakthrough Technical Communication Management](#). TCE Labs. 11–12/12. London

[Creating Personas to Focus on Your Users](#). Cherryleaf. 24 or 25/11

[Documentation Metrics – Estimating, Scheduling, and Tracking Documentation Projects](#) Cherryleaf. 24–25/11

[Documentation Project Planning](#). Cherryleaf. 24 or 25/11

[Effective Writing for Biomedical Professionals](#). Oxon CE. 24–26/11

[Information Engineering](#). TCE Labs. 9–10/12 London

[Presenting in Biomedicine, Science & Technology](#). Oxon CE. 27–28/11

Editing and proofreading courses

Brush up your Grammar. SfEP. 24/11

Copy-editing, Efficient. SfEP. **22/11**

Copy-editing problems. SfEP. 25/11

On-screen editing. SfEP. Part 2 **29/11**

Proofreading, Brush up Your. SfEP. 10/12

Working for a Client. SfEP. **13/12**

Indexing courses

[Indexing Print and Online Documents](#). Cherryleaf. 24 or 25/11

British Standards Institute seminars

The British Standards Institute (BSI) has a range of seminars that may interest authors working in the quality management field. Those of general interest to our profession include:

- [Email and the Law](#)
- [Information Security and the Law](#)

BSI told us rather too late about these seminars but will be repeating them in 2004.

See the [BSI Business Information Seminars](#) page for more details, particularly their [Information and Security page](#).

Conference 2003

Welcome speech

This is an extract Peter Greenfield's welcome speech from the recent conference. This version is taken from Peter's notes and gives a good idea of what he said on the night.

How things are changing

"Our industry has undergone terrific change; some might argue it has even driven some of that change. The first technical publications department I worked for (aircraft and instrumentation industry) was actually part of the drawing office, and the customer handbooks were written by the press and media office – we never even saw customer manuals. But then I have also been part of training, central services, technical support, marketing and at one point even IT data centre. I am pleased to tell you I am now part of the 'Communications Division'.

"Traditional skills were split up between writers (yes, we have always argued between technical writer and technical author) and illustrators and everything we did ended up in a big cardboard box and was put on a lorry. I suspect few of us would really like to go back to those days, even though it was always sunny in August, snowed in December and Christmas did not start just after the ISTC Conference.

"I suspect that in today's offices we are more multi-skilled than we were, and I suspect that IT skills are very much a necessity; they may even be the reason why some here today joined the industry in the first place. I suspect that we are all more concerned with shape and colour, with cost and with legal requirements and I am sure that the demarcation between producers of words and producers of pictures has long since gone. The trends are clear: we are different people with different skills, and ultimately with more responsibility and less time.

Does the tail wag the dog?

"One of the issues I would like to take up is that of IT, do we drive it or does it drive us? I doubt whether many of us would be in this industry if we did not have a love of gadgetry, change and development but we should seriously challenge the use of IT and question how we use it in the best interest of the user.

"Again, no 'living in the past' agenda here, simply that we should use this wonderful technology to improve the user's life not to build in a level of complexity that satisfies our needs and leaves the user confused and feeling inadequate.

"A story from a few years ago happened when we installed an online manuals system. I had a desperate phone call from a user (I try to avoid them, but this one got through) who simply could not find the link that we were pointing them to.

"All came clear when we realised that the reason they could not see the link was that the mouse was in the way – they had it on the screen at the time. We also had a problem with a satellite installation – well it was laying in the car park at the time, but you would be amazed how long it took us to get that piece of information out of the user!

"Old stories – but used to question whether we **really** think about the user, what they know, where they will be using the information and what distractions they have at the time. And when we use the latest piece of software with the most up-to-date functionality, has the culture and understanding of the user reached a point where it is really useful to them?

New skills for new times

"One of the reasons for being in an Institute such as ISTC is for personal development, not just in terms of actually getting it but also in terms of judging what type of development and therefore skills will be most required in the future. We can only judge this by keeping in contact with as many and as varied practitioners of our art as possible.

"It is a fact that each time we discover another delivery channel for our information; paper to screen and now to video and on, we need to learn another set of skills and another set of user requirements while never losing the original skills.

"The list of skills required, and I guess I have to add software required, simply continues to grow; perhaps even to the point where we will need to specialise in certain areas of communications as has happened with so many other industries. But I think communicating is different.

What do we need by way of communication?

"We should ask ourselves why there is the need for the amount of communication today; is there a genuine need or has it been created? Well, clearly there must be a user hunger for information. Whether this is because people are now de-skilled, or whether life is getting more complicated, whether there is more choice available and therefore more confusion, whether culture has not kept up with technological possibility or whether people are hoping there is a magic piece of information to take them to the light at the end of the information tunnel.

"It is certainly true that products now have more functionality and that as they are mostly computerised in some form or another the actual operation can rarely be seen and therefore understood, it is certainly true that we do not build a familiarity with a product as we use only a fraction of the capability. You only have to watch anyone of us struggling to change an MS Windows setting that we changed by mistake and last used when we set up the computer.

"Or watch the average parent try to set up a video recorder when their kids are out for the first time leaving them stranded with a remote they have never seen before. All of this has changed the need for communication, and, to make matters worse, we are using the very same technology to bring the required information to them. Yes we have created our own need for communication.

"Herein lies the issue. As all this information competes for space, there is a need for information of various types to share the space and indeed to support the various types of communication being delivered, and as the same delivery tool is usually being used (certainly in terms of online communication) the user expects the various types of information to be delivered together. So then why should the marketing blurb, latest news, recommendations, competition, advertisement and technical support not share the same space?

And so, even if we do not write the marketing blurb or whatever, how we can ignore it or not help it share our space so that the user has an end to end experience of everything they need to know about their product from the time they bought it to the time they throw it away.

Convergence for the way ahead

"Simply put, the channels we use have opened up the opportunities for communicators to communicate, and to cross

over with all the other types of communication that are floating about. Not only have the illustrator and the author moved closer together, but also various forms of author (such as copywriter and press officer) have moved closer together. And as the communicators art comes together, so do the various industries that need the skills of the communicator. I believe that the skills we have always had and the disciplines that go with technical writing put us in an excellent position to take on these additional responsibilities. I am not suggesting we can or should become Alistair Campbells, I am suggesting that as all the various types of information merge into one channel our skills and experience are ideal to control, catalogue and manage them.

"We must continue to develop: if we stand still (in the words of Colin Chapman the Lotus designer and great engineer) we are in fact going backwards. My point is that we must move on by adding to our existing skills, not throwing the old skills and disciplines away. We must resist the unnecessary and develop the quality aspects of our jobs to deliver real user benefit and in that also deliver the cost benefits that all companies now need to deliver. In short 'do not throw the baby out with the bath water', but do move forward and look for the opportunities to use the knowledge and skills that have always been part of the technical communication industry.

Peter Greenfield is Online Channels Manager at Abbey and Fellow of ISTC.

Book reviews

Design and Typography in Easy Steps

by Sally Hughes

Publisher: Computer Steps, UK. 1998. ISBN: 0-84078-004-5, £9.99

This is a very practical book, with no wasted space. There is no foreword or information about the author — she just pitches straight in. The eleven chapters are:

1. Starting your design
2. Typing your text
3. Understanding typefaces
4. Spacing your text
5. Organising your space
6. Grids and typography
7. Spice up your design
8. Avoiding common design mistakes
9. Graphics in your designs
10. Tints
11. Designing web pages

Hughes suggests nine steps to compile a successful communication. These include the obvious processes of understanding your readers, deciding on a format, creating roughs and then testing various page layouts before committing yourself to a timetable.

There are lots of sketches to show the different effects that Hughes describes.

The advice on using tabs to space text is very clear, and the benefits are explained, such as what happens when typefaces are changed. The potential for confusion between characters in some typefaces follows and there is a section on special characters. The difference between a dash and hyphen is explained but the difference between an ellipsis and three dots is almost imperceptible.

The chapter on typefaces is very explicit and gives a clear explanation of the features of popular typefaces. Hughes gives several examples of text printed in different typefaces, so that the reader is left in no doubt about the choice for a specific purpose.

She goes into detail about how spacing affects the appearance of a document and influences readers. This takes the reader smoothly into leading and line length. Readers are advised to use the computer setting to add space between paragraphs, instead of the common 'two Returns'. However, the difference is hardly noticeable in the examples given. Indenting follows, then spacing within titles.

Many readers will get some benefit from the explanation of 'tracking'. Hughes recommends this treatment of text to avoid widows and orphans, but does not mention that most word processor programs can be set to look after this automatically.

Although spacing has been dealt with earlier, there is a whole chapter on designing the page using grids, margins and columns. Readers are advised to sketch out page layouts to avoid making mistakes. There is adequate treatment of symmetry, alignment, justified text and hyphenation. Hughes even shows good ideas on how to design covers for reports, then goes on to show how some typefaces are better than others in tables.

Chapter 7, Spice up your design, shows how rules, tints, pull quotes and boxes can be used to make a document more attractive. Drop capitals are well illustrated and there is a useful page on how to choose the size and shape of bullets for the best appearance.

Many readers will recognise some of the items in Chapter 8, "Avoiding common design mistakes". It is interesting to see that paragraphs are not indented and there is a blank line between paragraphs. Earlier in the book, the author advised indenting paragraphs and avoiding the blank line. Typefaces and alignment are revisited. Hughes uses mock Latin to show the effects of different typefaces and layouts without the distraction that might arise from a readable text.

Graphics in documents could easily take up a full textbook but the 20 pages in this book provide a useful introduction to the subject. It is good to see that the basics of how computers handle pictures are explained.

Pixels and bitmaps are described, along with a brief mention of vector graphics and some information on how Pagemaker and QuarkXpress deal with graphics files.

Line drawings and diagrams, including charts, are explained and then there is an impressive section on scanning. Resolution of the scanned image is dealt with and Hughes advises when you should get a service bureau to do the work if you need fine resolution. There are excellent photographs showing how a scanned image can be improved, if you know how to use an image-manipulating program. Captions create a link between the text and the graphic, so they should enhance the reader's understanding of both. Did you know that people often scan a publication before reading it thoroughly, dipping into the captions as a way of sampling the text?

There are a few pages of useful information and advice on using tints, in colour and in monochrome; the book then concludes with a chapter on the design of web pages. In this, Hughes gives a brief but adequate explanation of HTML coding and explains how people navigate around the site.

I fully agree with the suggestion on the back cover that this book is useful for:

- professionals seeking fast results
- students with a limited budget
- home users in need of a simple learning aid

- self-employed people with no time for formal training
- cost-effective training for staff.

At 23mm x 19mm, the book is small enough to keep on a desk or to carry in a briefcase. It provides good value for the modest price.

The book's author, Sally Hughes, is a freelance trainer, consultant and designer; she is Senior Lecturer in Publishing at Oxford Brookes University.

Reviewed by John Crossley FISTC.

Technical Writing for Dummies

Technical Writing for Dummies, by Sheryl Lindsell-Roberts (2001) Wiley

ISBN: 0764553089, £14.99

This is an interesting reference book, which has the virtue of demystifying the work of technical writers.

Part 1 focuses the key characteristics of technical communication and the work environment.

Part 2 provides clear explanations of the document life cycle and of individual tasks in an engaging manner, and goes straight to the essence of what technical writing should be: the effective provision of information that is as simple as possible, but no simpler.

Part 3 considers the features of different types of documents, covering user manuals and spec sheets as well as more presentations and executive summaries; this is complemented in Part 5 with advice on publishing in a technical journals and writing grants.

Part 4 is about the use of computers, both as a source of information and as a means of displaying information.

Someone new to the technical writing profession, or wondering whether technical writing is for them, would find valuable information to confirm their choice of career.

For more proficient technical writers, this would be a reasonably useful reference text, with some interesting insights.

It is unlikely that a writer with many years' experience would find this book challenging, though it would still be an enjoyable read; the tips and checklists are worth considering to assess the effectiveness of practice. Where this book may be most useful is in situations when you need to explain to colleagues what it is that technical writers do.

One possible problem though: Sheryl Lindsell-Roberts' 'no-nonsense' writing may well make non-writers think "Oh, that looks easy. I can do that too"... perhaps a mixed blessing?

Reviewed by Florence Dujardin, second year tutor for the [MA in Technical Communication](#) at Sheffield Hallam University.

Odds and ends

Brigitte's award

A leading light in ISTC's sister body in Germany has received the first [TCeurope](#) Technical Communication Award on the occasion of the 25th birthday of [tekomp](#).

Brigitte Beutenmüller was responsible for setting up tekomp in 1978 to look after the needs of German technical communicators. She also represented tekomp at the international umbrella body, INTECOM and later became President of that organisation.

Brigitte merited the honour as a result of many years dedicated work, helping tekomp grow and prosper.

Her unstinting work encouraged better standards of technical writing and built closer ties between national bodies such as the UK's ISTC. That work also manifested itself at Forum '95 in Dortmund: she was the main organiser.



Brigitte receiving the award from Claus Noack, the President of tekomp.

This is broken

The [This Is Broken](#) website is worth a regular visit. Updated every weekday, it's a usually humorous look at the unsatisfactory "customer experience".

Many of the examples are from the realm where technical communication meets HCI/MMI and general design.

Breaking the chain

[BreakTheChain.org](#) aims to "reduce number of people who routinely forward email chain letters without questioning their validity or long-term impact".

The site keeps copies of common chain emails, placing them into categories such as virus hoaxes and health warnings.

Next time you get a questionable email, it's worth checking here with their [search page](#) first to see if it's a well-worn chain email doing the rounds.

Not broken, just fractured

Josephine Wilson, who reported the [Visions of Science Awards](#) in last month's Newsletter fractured her ankle whilst waitressing in her evening job.

Jo spent a week in a hospital and now sports a purple, fibreglass cast. We wish her a speedy recovery.

RoboHelp v WebWorks

In the [October Newsletter](#), our article on the launch of [RoboHelp for FrameMaker](#) said there were yet to be any objective comparisons between it and [WebWorks Publisher 2003 for FrameMaker](#).

ISTC affiliate Cherryleaf aims to provide just such an unbiased view at its [Single Sourcing with FrameMaker](#) seminar, which will be held on 4 December at the unusual venue of Roedean girls' school.

Veredus

As mentioned on page 3, Michael Plant will be reviewing the new Veredus single-sourcing software in the next *Communicator*.

For those who can't wait, there's a short review at Canadian author [Keith Soltys'](#) weblog, [Core Dump](#). The relevant entry is for 12 November 2003.

Science fact and science fiction fans may also find Keith's blog interesting.

Thwarting spam

To try to thwart address harvester programs, the newsletter slightly disguises explicit email addresses.

Most embedded email addresses come with a **bonus amphibian**, which you should remove before sending the email.