



ISSUE 74

ITI LRG NEWSLETTER

www.iti-lrg.org.uk



SEPTEMBER 2023

From the Editor

Welcome to this September *LRG Newsletter*!

As summer winds down to make way for autumn, the LRG Committee is turning its attention to the final events on the 2023 calendar. Coming up this month, a very special event at the British Library will see us go hybrid for the very first time, while we will be returning to Piccadilly's Glassblower pub in December for our annual Christmas party and AGM. For details on how to book, please turn to [page 2](#).

In the meantime, the Committee would love to hear your thoughts on how we can shape the 2024 LRG events calendar. To this end, **Abigail Harby** has produced an anonymous survey for LRG members, the details of which can be found on [page 7](#).

Elsewhere in this issue, you can find **Abigail Harby's** recap of Silke Lührmann's May talk on PEMT on [pages 4 to 6](#), while **Agneta Harrison** reflects on our August Hampstead pub crawl on [page 8](#). Meanwhile, on [page 9](#), you can find a picture postcard of Roger Bone's stellar guided tour of Smithfield pubs.

Our 'View from the booth' column also returns on [page 3](#), where **Cecilia Lipovsek** explores The Back Effect, while **Peter Bowen** joins us for this month's LRG Member Interview on [page 10](#).

So, without any further ado, please enjoy the content on offer in this September edition of the *LRG Newsletter*!

Nicholas Nicou, Editor

Committee News

Committee to meet again in person in October

Ever since Covid, the LRG Committee has met online and we have continued to do so even after restrictions were lifted. However, we have decided it would be good to meet in person, especially since new people have joined the Committee over the past two years.

We are immensely grateful to **Pat Tregoning**, who joined the Committee recently and has welcomed participants at our meetings and other events and made sure that everyone receives a name label.

Clara Parra has also been doing wonderful work on our website (iti-lrg.org.uk), bringing news of our events to LRG members and the wider world. Interestingly, some of the translators and interpreters who joined our summer Pub Crawl (see [page 8](#)) had found out about it on Google.

We have two very exciting events coming up, one CPD, one social. The British Library has kindly offered to host an introduction to their IP and

Business Services. This will be our first hybrid event – for full details, see [page 2](#). Then, in December, we will be at The Glassblower again for a brief AGM and annual LRG Christmas Party (see [page 2](#)), where **Abigail Harby** will also report on feedback from the questionnaire she has designed in order to find out what kinds of events or activities members want (see [page 7](#)).

I have let Committee members know that I will be standing down from my role as Chairman at the end of 2024, which means the LRG needs to elect a new Chairman. Do let me or one of the other Committee members know if you think you might be interested.

Dagmar Berger-Brown

We are very sorry to be letting LRG members know that our friend and colleague Dagmar Berger-Brown died in August. As soon as we have news of her funeral, we will let LRG members know.

Pamela Mayorcas, LRG Chairman

Forthcoming events

Introduction to the British Library's Business and IP Centre

Tuesday, 26 September 2023, 13:45 to 16:00

Please note: this is a hybrid event. There are 30 spaces for people attending in person and 30 online spaces

- **Cost:** LRG members: free; non-LRG members: £10; students: £5
- **Time:** guided tour of the centre starts at 14:00 (please arrive at 13:45 to clear security); the presentation starts at 15:00 (if joining online, please start the registration process at 14:45)

The British Library holds a long-standing reputation for innovative services that support businesses and researchers. The Business & IP Centre is also unique due to its patent and business collection. The space at the centre is a hub of activity, and due to its success after almost two decades, the centre is now part of a BIPC National Network and is a London hub for business support.

As part of the presentation, there will be a brief tour of the Business & IP Centre at the British Library for those attending in person. A Zoom link for those attending online will be provided two days before the event.

To book: [LRGbritishlibrary.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/LRGbritishlibrary)

The Translator's Little Book of Art

Thursday, 16 November 2023, 17:00 to 20:00

- **Venue:** University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2HW
- **Cost:** Free

At this University of Westminster/LRG event, you will be taken on a whistle-stop tour of the ins and outs of collaboration. LRG members Nathalie Reis, Adriana Tortoriello, and Caroline Durant will present "The Fruits of Collaboration", a talk that will provide useful insights for veteran and new translators alike, interspersed with short exercises where you can put your skills to the test.

After the presentation and workshop, you will be able to meet the presenters and find out more about their latest book, *The Translator's Little Book of Art*.

To book: [booklaunch_littlebookofart.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/booklaunch_littlebookofart)

ITI LRG AGM & Christmas Party 2023

Friday, 1 December 2023, 18:30 to 21:30

- **Venue:** The Glassblower Pub, 40-42 Glasshouse Street, London W1B 5JY
- **Cost:** LRG members: £15; students: £10; all others: £20

The LRG Christmas Party is back once again at The Glassblower Pub, right by Piccadilly Circus. After a brief AGM, a full buffet will be served together with some Christmas treats.

A chance to catch up with friends and colleagues in person, enjoy some tasty food, and share your ideas for LRG events in 2024 with Committee members. One free drink (glass of punch, wine, or beer) per ticket.

To book: [LRG_Christmas23.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/LRG_Christmas23)

The benefits of working as a social enterprise

Wednesday, 24 January 2024, 19:00 to 21:00

- **Venue:** The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Court, Temple, London WC2R 3JJ
- **Cost:** LRG members and students: free; non-LRG members: £5

We are delighted that Maria Scheibengraf has agreed to present at the LRG's annual 'New Year-New You' event. During the session, she will talk about the company she co-founded, Crisol Translation Services Ltd, which is a social enterprise company that strives to provide an ethical alternative in the translation industry and to develop its business as a force for good. This is an opportunity for LRG members and visitors to re-evaluate their work and business model.

To book: [LRGnewyearnewyou24.eventbrite.co.uk](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/LRGnewyearnewyou24)

Welcome to our
new LRG members!

Giulia Grottola
Anna Wright



The Back Effect

Over the years, I have noticed there is a very curious phenomenon that happens in every meeting or event where good interpreting is provided. I call it The Back Effect.

It goes like this:

1. Delegates or attendees enter the room and are given headphones and receivers.
2. There is concern in their faces and, sometimes, even annoyance.
3. They (slightly) reluctantly sit down, usually on the edge of their seats, showing tension in their shoulders.
4. They put their headsets on and select their preferred language channel.
5. The event or meeting begins.
6. The interpretation begins.
7. They listen.
8. Slowly but surely, they start leaning back until they are resting comfortably against the back of their chairs and their shoulders relax.
9. The interpretation works! They're in.

I guess it is only natural to be primarily focused on ourselves, on what we want and what we need. But I think we sometimes lose sight of what it is like for those who listen to us and depend on us both to understand what is going on around them and to make key decisions influenced by our performance.

I think we also often forget how much our audiences have been burnt in the past by poorly trained and/or unprepared interpreters that – simply – failed them.

We tend to get angry whenever our ability and the value of our work are questioned, and yet we rarely put ourselves in our audience's shoes and look at the situation from their perspective.

They come to an event, which they probably paid a small fortune to attend, or have a meeting that is their only chance to build a rapport with a potential partner or close a game-changing deal, and suddenly they are handed a headset and told they will depend on a stranger for the rest of the day.

Yes, I know we all do the same many times in our daily lives, like when we get on a plane and trust a pilot we have never met before to fly us safely to our destination. The difference is that we know beyond any doubt that the pilot has undergone extensive training. We also know there are plenty of safety mechanisms in place to correct our course if needed. This also applies to the surgeon operating on us or the dentist applying the drill to our teeth.

So, why the distrust? Why the tension and annoyance when interpreters are brought in to assist? And what can we do to make The Back Effect the default and not the exception?

Often the answer to this question involves a version of 'educating the client': explaining to them what we do, telling them how it works and what we need in order to do our job more comfortably, advising them on how to separate the good interpreters from the bad, and more.

But I always think there are two sides to every story. So, how about the opposite? How about educating ourselves about our clients, understanding their concerns, their frustrations, their needs, and their goals better? How about sitting on that chair and putting on those headsets ourselves at least once?

Quality of interpretation aside, I think this is the bit that is missing when there is no Back Effect: when the service provision is more a monologue than a dialogue.

Interpreters rarely get standing ovations. Better said, interpreters never get standing ovations. At best, we get a thank you at the end of the meeting or event.

This Back Effect is as good as it gets for us. In a way, it is our standing ovation. The feedback that keeps us going. The thumbs-up we strive for. The silent appreciation that makes it all worth it. Maybe it should be our North Star, too.

Cecilia is a London-based diplomatic and conference interpreter specialised in Latin America and founder of MULTILATERAL. Find her at www.multilateral.london

PENT: A PROMISE OR A CURSE?

In May, an event jointly organised by the LRG and UCL saw Silke Lührmann assess the current and future landscape of machine translation and post-editing. **Abigail Harby** reports

Since ChatGPT's release in late 2022 and with large language models making rapid, step-up improvements, conversations on automation, machine translation (MT), and post-editing (PE) have become all the more topical.

On 16 May 2023, Silke Lührmann, a successful translator, editor, writer, and researcher in the field, delighted LRG members with a presentation and discussion on post-editing of machine translation (PEMT).

The LRG and University College London jointly hosted the event at UCL, allowing avid translators and interpreters alike to get involved and stay informed.

Silke's presentation covered current concerns about automation in translation, the impact on translators and target

texts as a product, what the future holds from different perspectives, and realistic use cases for PEMT. This was followed by a discussion and Q&A with the audience.

Will MT be employed in all use cases with no or very little regard for how useful the tech is for the translation?

Silke's talk began with an outline of the current translation automation landscape and particular concerns that have arisen from her research and industry experience.

Over recent years, machine translation has improved at an

alarmingly impressive rate. As a result, more clients are relying on MT or PEMT instead of human translators and professional translation services. The worrying question is: will MT be employed in all use cases with no or very little regard for how useful or accurate the technology is for the translation?

Additionally, translators are expected to use MT, as identified in a 2020 survey. However, the general meaning produced is often insufficient and extra input is usually required. In consequence, the worry is that PEMT will lower the overall quality of translations on the market.

Silke emphasised that MT has great potential but there are currently implementation challenges surrounding how practically to use and incorporate it into business models. Indeed,



there is a fear that small/mid-market translation companies could go out of business, whereas larger companies have the resources needed to innovate with MT and process large volumes of work.

Cost-cutter

According to Silke, MT is often seen by agencies as a useful cost-cutter that lowers prices. While it is translators who should be benefiting from MT, PEMT is lowering prices and therefore decreasing translators' average rates of pay. This also puts pressure on them to work faster, affecting their work-life-balance, mental wellbeing, and translation quality.

PEMT comes with its own challenges. Silke described it as a "difficult and exhausting task" that combines quality management, proofreading, and translation. The

issue here is that language service providers should be employing linguists with a particular set of skills and should be training individuals specifically for PEMT. Yet, at present, many translators are

MT may be more useful for language service providers than for individual translators

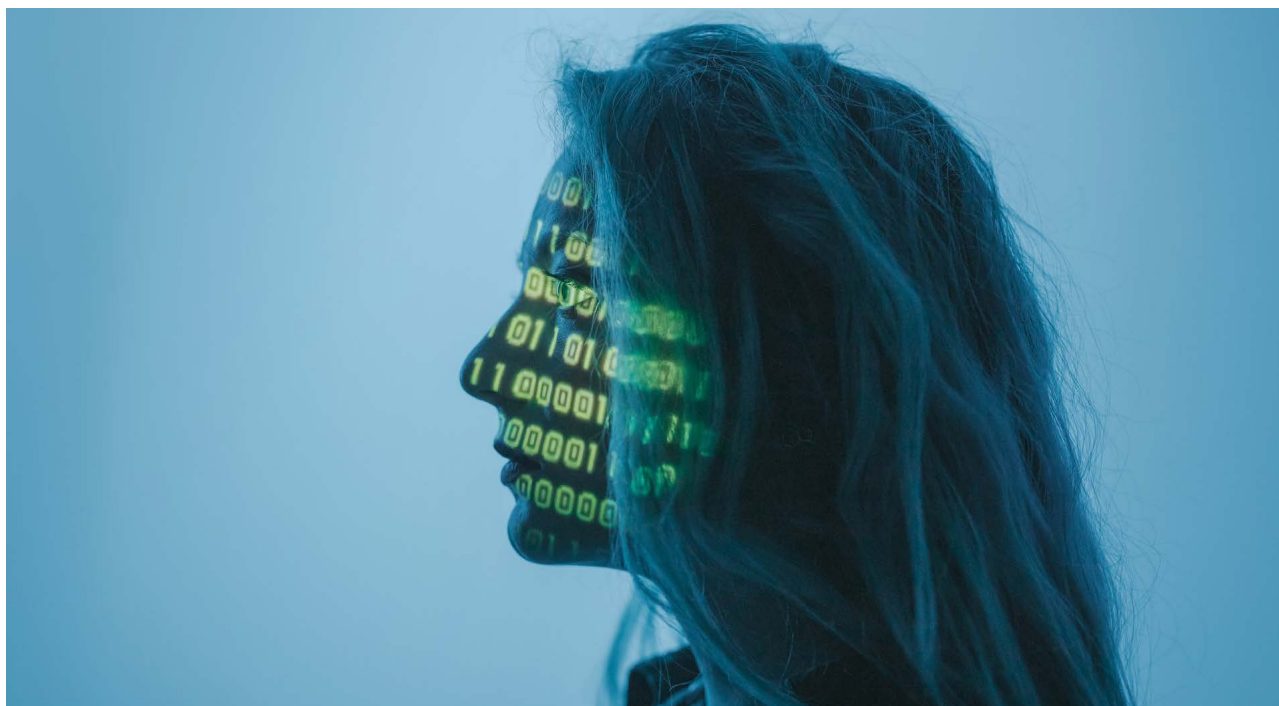
simply asked to proofread texts, without being told whether the texts are MT output or have been produced by human translators. An important message for all attendees was that for translators to experience sustainable success, a translation career must be

enjoyable and economically viable. Silke suggests that using MT may take away some of the joy of real translation for human translators and that MT may therefore be more useful for language service providers than for individual translators.

Despite concerns around automation and MT, translators do still want to be translators: that's according to a survey done for Silke's PhD research in 2018. Silke thus presented two possible future outcomes for the human translator + technology equation.

The first of these is 'technologically augmented' linguists, where human linguists remain in control of the translation process but use technology to augment their work. This idea promotes the concept that translators remain central and these tools work for us to improve productivity, consistency, and

Reviews of recent events



accuracy, and focus on 'high-value' tasks.

The second is 'sidelined' linguists, where machines will translate and revise each other's work and human linguists will be used only in rare cases. Silke highlighted a quote from RWS Chairman Andrew Brode, who said in 2017: "As NMT improves and becomes more commercial, we will be turning our internal translators into post-editors."

Silke then drew our attention to the impact that automation, AI, and PEMT are having on working conditions for translators.

The Oxford University Fairwork project's 2022 Translation and Transcription Platform Report found that only two out of the nine translation and transcription platforms met basic labour standards, while four platforms did not score a single point for many of the different criteria.

Silke's concern is that existing

trends may be exacerbated by advances in AI and NMT and that current market conditions – such as time pressure, tight deadlines, long supply chains, lack of transparency, and receiving little information for projects – are forcing translators to act like robots.

Translators should and must discuss MT to be better equipped and gain a competitive advantage

It is for all these reasons that Silke emphasised the need for translators to be vocal about MT.

Many translators currently seem to be riddled with fear of discussing their opinion of MT: if you don't embrace MT as a translator, you're seen as resistant

to change, but if you're too enthusiastic, you could be accused of embracing MT too quickly and being a lazy translator. According to Silke, translators should and must discuss MT to be better equipped and gain a competitive advantage.

The question is how translators can ensure clients place enough value on the unique qualities assured by human translators so that they are willing to pay a premium, rather than resorting to AI, NMT, or post-editing.

The service provided by human translators is distinctive and there are many benefits. While machines can be a service provider, they cannot be interpretive.

As humans, we can provide a full service by entering into a dialogue with project owners and commissioners to ensure full satisfaction with the finished product.

So, let's keep talking!



The LRG Committee would like to invite you to take part in our events survey.

At the July 2023 Committee meeting, we reflected on the year's events. And now, we invite all LRG members to reflect with us to ensure that future events are, as the Germans say, "the yellow from the egg".

Whether it's an in-person social like the recent July pub crawl around Hampstead, an online/hybrid business-focused discussion, the ever-popular Meet the Client, or our annual Christmas soirée, LRG members are at the heart of every successful event.

The last year has seen an array of events taking place almost monthly at various locations across London and online. Guest speakers have graced us with their

immense knowledge and LRG members have continued to show their support and make every event worth attending.

But what if we could make the 2023/24 events and beyond even better?

Get stuck in

We have put together a survey of 10 questions giving members a chance to share their feedback on LRG events and to make suggestions for the future.

We would like your opinions about how LRG events are run, event prices, locations and venues, event formats, and event topics. All responses are anonymous, no personal data is taken, and individual comments or answers will not be shared beyond Committee discussions with regard

to how to plan future LRG events.

All feedback is welcome and will be used to highlight elements that are working well and, of course, areas for improvement.

Language enables crystal clear communication and we would like every member of the LRG to be heard so that you are able to make the most of your membership. Your feedback will be used to shape the LRG events calendar.

The Committee are always open to hearing your thoughts, so please do reach out via email or in-person when at one of our events if you have any other suggestions or points to highlight.

Abigail Harby

To complete the survey, visit forms.gle/GELRq3jCzuCnixZj7

Reviews of recent events

AN EVENING IN HAMPSTEAD

In August, it was once again time for the LRG's annual pub crawl, with the popular event returning this year to Hampstead Village in North London. **Agneta Harrison** reports

In early August, it was once again time for the LRG's annual pub crawl. This year, the popular event returned to Hampstead Village in North London.

This area is the perfect location for a pub crawl, boasting a large number of inviting pubs within a short distance of each other. We were also lucky with the weather, enjoying a warm and sunny evening after weeks of chilly rain.

One of the nice things about the LRG pub crawl is that members can join in or drop out throughout the evening, as the addresses of the pubs and the approximate times we would arrive at each one had been shared with members in advance. Our group, which consisted of LRG members from far and wide, working in a multitude of languages, grew in number as we moved from pub to pub.



The first pub on the list was the King William IV pub on the High Street, just down from Hampstead tube station. A good choice for latecomers such as myself, as I was able to catch the group just as it was setting off up the hill towards the next stop on the list, the Holly Bush.

The pub crawl was led by Philip Slotkin, who lives locally and navigated the myriad hilly, winding alleyways and steps of Hampstead with ease. Some of us perhaps found the steep climb a bit more of a struggle but it was well worth it once we reached the Holly Bush, a gem of a pub dating back to the 18th century.

Here we gathered in a more private, quieter room behind the bar, where members were able to sit down to catch up with each other.

However, this being a pub crawl, there was no time to get too settled, and we soon headed off back down the steep paths and steps to the next stop on the list,



the Duke of Hamilton in New End. This was also our designated food stop and many people chose to have a bite to eat here. The pub has an extensive menu and a large, covered outdoor space at the back where we were able to sit down to eat and drink and carry on chatting and mingling.

By the time we set off for the last stop on our pub crawl, The Flask – in Flask Walk, just off the High Street – the group had dwindled in number, but a handful of us stopped by for one last drink in this historic pub (is there any other kind in Hampstead?) before heading off to our various corners of London.

Thanks go to Events Secretary Marta Prieto, Pamela Mayorcas, and Philip Slotkin for arranging this delightful event. The effort that goes into planning these walks and events is very much appreciated.

Picture postcard



The Fox & Anchor



The Lord Raglan

MARKET PUBS OF SMITHFIELD

On 17 August 2023, expert guide Roger Bone led LRG members on a tour of the historic pubs of Smithfield, offering members a chance to catch up while basking in the summer sun

Photographs by Marta Prieto



The Sutton Arms



The Hand & Shears

LRG Member interview

Peter Bowen

In this issue, we caught up with LRG member Peter Bowen to discuss his experiences as a translator

Tell us a little bit about your background.

I was born in the glamorous setting of Crawley Hospital a long time ago and grew up in Horsham, West Sussex, and at boarding school in Sussex and Dorset. The latter included a term-long spell at a school in Germany. After another short stint in Germany after school, I read Modern Languages at the University of Bristol, including a semester each in Lyon and Vienna.

When did you first become interested in languages?

Languages were always my best subject area at school, where I learned French, German, Latin, and a little Ancient Greek and Russian – the latter two now dusty fragments on the lowest shelf at the back of my brain. My mother spoke French, German, and Italian so perhaps it is in the blood.

When and why did you decide to pursue a career in translation?

After university, I had a lot of different jobs, from driving to private tuition to being an extra in films in Vienna. I spent a year at a publisher in London, editing the catalogue of the British Library. This gave me a pass to the reading room in the British Museum, which I loved to visit. However, the job was drier than an Egyptian mummy, so I gave it up and went back to university, or rather the Polytechnic of Central London, to study translation for a year.

I also learned Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, and Modern Greek in that year, or at least enough to translate from them. The Poly had links to a translation company in Denmark and I went there to work for a few months. I subsequently freelanced for the same company under contract for many

years before taking the icy plunge into the freelance waterfall. This waterfall has nourished me spiritually and financially ever since, although its AI version is starting to look less attractive.

Have you attended any interesting translation events or webinars recently?

The most recent event I attended was the conference of the Swedish Association of Professional Translators in Umeå, way up in the north of Sweden. That conference also marked the end of my five-year term on the board of the same organisation. I am not generally all that keen on webinars or any online event. Nothing beats in-person gatherings and I hope that ITI and other organisations will continue to hold them.

What kind of projects have you been working on recently?

For most of this year I have worked on financial reports for a variety of Swedish clients. I work almost exclusively out of Swedish these days, and am authorised by the Swedish government as a translator. I also regularly translate legal documents and have translated a number of art books.

What are your plans for the future?

At the age of 60, my future is shorter than it might once have been, but I imagine I will work for a number of years yet. I have long harboured a desire to learn to fly and hope to start training towards a PPL next year. And there are places I want to visit, such as New Zealand, where my grandmother grew up.

Peter Bowen MITI translates from Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, French, and German into English. He is an authorised translator in Sweden, a Member of FAT (the Federation of Authorised Translators in Sweden), and a Member of SFÖ (the Swedish Association of Professional Translators)



AROUND THE WEB

Your regular digest of the top translation, interpreting, and language-related news on the Net



'The endangered languages that are fighting back' *BBC* (tinyurl.com/mr2mzpzw)

This compelling video explores how some of the languages that are most under threat are experiencing an unexpected revival.

'Learn a foreign language before it's too late' *The Atlantic* (tinyurl.com/3c5vhrtz)

This fascinating piece explores how the move to AI translation could disrupt the fundamentals of language learning, and how MT output can often be "slick but soulless".



'Spanish request for new EU languages adds to translation woes' *FT.com* (tinyurl.com/mrc4nesc)

This piece weighs up Spain's request for the EU to add Catalan, Basque, and Galician to the Union's 24 official languages.

'AI language models are rife with different political biases' *MIT Technology Review* (tinyurl.com/yc6hzztx)

This piece reflects on new research from the University of Washington, Carnegie Mellon University, and Xi'an Jiaotong University on political biases in AI language models.



'Less lost in translation: foreigners get high-tech help in Tokyo's baffling Shinjuku rail hub' *Reuters* (tinyurl.com/ywchskvy)

An automated translation window is helping tourists move around one of Tokyo's complex transportation hubs.

Dates for your Diary

Tuesday, 26 September 2023 13:45-16:00	Introduction to the British Library's Business and IP Centre <u>Cost:</u> LRG members: free; non-LRG members: £10; students: £5 In-person attendees will be given a brief tour of the Business & IP Centre at the British Library and a Zoom link will be provided for those attending online. To book: LRGbritishlibrary.eventbrite.co.uk
Thursday, 16 November 2023 17:00-20:00	The Translator's Little Book of Art <u>Venue:</u> University of Westminster, 309 Regent Street, London W1B 2HW At this free in-person University of Westminster/LRG event, you will be taken on a whistle-stop tour of the ins and outs of collaboration. To book: booklaunch_littlebookofart.eventbrite.co.uk
Friday, 1 December 2023 18:30-21:30	ITI LRG AGM & Christmas Party 2023 <u>Venue:</u> The Glassblower Pub, 40-42 Glasshouse Street, London W1B 5JY <u>Cost:</u> LRG members: £15; students: £10; all others: £20 A chance to catch up with friends and colleagues in person, enjoy some tasty food, and put forward your ideas for LRG events in 2024 with Committee members. To book: LRG_Christmas23.eventbrite.co.uk
Wednesday, 24 January 2024 19:00-21:00	The benefits of working as a social enterprise <u>Venue:</u> The Devereux Pub, 20 Devereux Court, Temple, London WC2R 3JJ <u>Cost:</u> LRG members and students: free; non-LRG members: £5 Maria Scheibengraf will talk about her social enterprise company. To book: LRGnewyearnewyou24.eventbrite.co.uk

LRG Committee contacts

Chairman & ITI Liaison

Pamela Mayorcas
info@iti-lrg.org.uk

Treasurer

Oliver Walter
treasurer@iti-lrg.org.uk

Deputy Treasurer

Damian Wordenweber

Membership Secretary

Rebecca Hendry
membership@iti-lrg.org.uk

Webmaster

Clara Parra
webmaster@iti-lrg.org.uk

Newsletter Editor

Nicholas Nicou
editor@iti-lrg.org.uk

Newsletter Contributor

Abigail Harby

Interpreters' Representative

Débora Chobanian
dchob@hotmail.co.uk

Publicity Officer

Nathalie Reis
n.reis@btinternet.com

Events Secretary

Marta Prieto
events@iti-lrg.org.uk

Events Liaison

Pat Tregoning

Minutes Secretary

Vacant: contact info@iti-lrg.org.uk to express interest

The views expressed in authored articles are those of the writer(s) and do not necessarily represent the views of the LRG or its Committee.