



Guidelines for sub-editors

from Mike Noble, Editor

If you would like to produce a page or pages for inclusion in Chatterbox, perhaps on behalf of your community, group, club or other organization, the following guidelines will help you to produce them so that they blend with the overall Chatterbox style.

Please bear in mind that Chatterbox tries to reflect all aspects of the area it serves - the amount of space devoted to any one organization, event, etc. will need to remain proportionate to its context. The Editor retains responsibility for deciding whether any submission will be included.

I am expecting that one of the major problems in this process is likely to be the fact that I am a Mac user, and I imagine that you are most likely to be PC users. Currently I am using Apple "Pages" (part of Apple "iWork") to assemble the magazine. But, never fear, I have now established that I can import PDF pages into my master layout. So, if we can agree some standards to work to, it should be possible for you to assemble page layouts and send them to me as pdf's which I can then paste in to my master layout.

Therefore, as a first requirement, I have produced an 8-page "Chbx master template" (which can be downloaded as a pdf from this page). This includes these various standards. For instance -

Typefaces

Body type:

Georgia, generally 9pt (sometimes 10pt)

8pt in side columns and other similar situations.

(Up to now I have used "Myriad", but I suspect that "Georgia" is more likely to be easily available to us all, and am therefore proposing that we standardize on this). The text of this column which you are reading is set in Georgia.

Headings and headlines:

Futura Condensed Extra Bold, sized to suit the situation.

Please note that you should not include typefaces and other elements with shadow effects, as our printer is at present unable to handle these - they print as large black rectangles, obliterating the text. A change of printer at some time in the future may overcome this problem.

Page Layout

On pages 6/7 of the master template I have quantified the 7-column page layout which I work to, and which forms the basis for our advertising charges. You can view these on the website (go to "advertising"); the page can also be downloaded from there. The remaining pages of the master template illustrate the application of these standards in various typical situations. You will understand that the column layout is not used to give a rigid application of 7 columns of text, but to give a framework for use in any combinations which conform to it. For instance, it lends itself nicely to three double columns and a single margin panel column, or possibly two triple columns and a single. This gives a unifying discipline to page layouts. There are various examples in the master template.

Page numbering

In order to avoid complicating the page numbering in the final copy, I will continue my practice of producing a master layout for each issue, which contains all the adverts and standard elements. This will be available by press date (14th of the month preceding publication date) and will be subsequently developed into the final layout.

I will be able to then paste page pdf's, which you may produce, into this as the layout develops. If you confine your page layouts to the "sub-editors' page area", as shown on p7 of the Chbx master template, I expect to be able to paste your pdf into the page and then move it to the back, so that my page numbering system will be superimposed. You will be able to see, by reference to the master layout, what areas you will need to leave blank (for adverts, etc.) on any particular page. This master layout is available for download from the website (see above) but please note that it cannot be regarded as final until press date.

Initial trial

All this is fine in theory, but has not yet been tried in practice. We are proposing a possible trial in time for Chatterbox #40 (Spring 2007), if this can be achieved. Lots of things can (and probably will) go wrong before we have completed it, but if you want to take part, I suggest that your first step, obviously, will be to set yourself up with a page template layout, in whatever page layout package you use, so that you are able to set out pages to the standard pattern. By reference to the master layout for the forthcoming issue, you will be able to see which areas of the page need to be left blank for adverts etc. When you have a finished layout, you will need, of course, to remove your guide lines before making pdf's for sending to me, so obviously you should save a separate master of your page template, and work on a copy. The current master layout for the next issue is a long way from being finalized, but is provided for download, above, for you to refer to, and also, as I said, my "Chbx master template." These files for downloading from the website are low grade pdf's, to try to minimize their size. This won't matter, since they are for your reference only. Nevertheless they are fairly large files and they will take some time to download. (The pdf's of our finalized full copies, which are taken by our devoted followers in far-flung parts of the world, must take an absolute age to download!!) When it comes to your finalized page pdf's, though, these will form part of the published end product, so they will need to be reasonably high grade files, especially if they include photos. It's possible that this may give difficulty with emailing, however, because there is usually a file size limit, but we'll face that problem later! Please let me know if you run into this problem. We may have to use another method of transfer.

For trial layouts, don't worry about the actual written content for the moment - you can use Latin text if you want to - just try out the layout principles. I look forward to hearing from you!