

Margret Powell-Joss – A CV

Born and raised in the Bern area of Switzerland, I'm a linguist with a love of most things artistic, healthy, literary, musical and scientific. Having grown up with relatives and godparents in English-speaking countries means that the English language has always been very close to my heart.

I have been a free-lance translator and a part-time English tutor for adult non-native speakers since at least 1 May 1992.

In previous lives I was a multilingual secretary in Switzerland, England and France, working – in the pre-digital era – at a Swiss printing house near Bern, the Monotype Corporation in England and Paris, and Wander's, the world-famous producers of Ovaltine and other dietary products. However, a secretary's career options began to feel too constrained. So I went back to school to enhance my education and to obtain relevant qualifications for university entry in modern languages, history, geography, maths and science. To top up funds, I briefly returned to full-time work and soon became the in-house translator of a Lloyd's Insurance Broker based in Bern.

Academic life beckoned, however, and I enrolled at the University of Bern for degree courses in English and Spanish languages and literature, picking up some Latin along the way. As a research and library assistant I also acquired a number of academic skills including publishing and research, as well as computer literacy. On the side, I enjoyed being a part-time tutor of English and Spanish to adults.

After graduation I found out the hard way that – for all my love of books – I'll never make a good librarian. Instead, I experienced some exciting months on the news-desks of a local newspaper and a local radio station, where I had the privilege of interviewing people on the night the Berlin Wall came down on 9 November 1989. Last but not least, for three years running, I was transport manager for the International Jazz Festival in Bern – another very rewarding activity. Eventually, I joined ProClim- – the Swiss climate research platform – to take care of admin, produce translations and organise several major international conferences.

Having worked as a translator on the side all this time, I officially went free-lance as a translator on 1 May 1992, continuing to build up my private client-base, chiefly in the world of contemporary art and architecture, but also in public health and education.

Since early May 2008, I have lived very happily and productively in and near Oban on Scotland's amazing west coast. I continue to work for many of my long-standing clients in Switzerland and enjoy teaching English to private students and a weekly class funded by the local council in the context of Scotland's integration policy.

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