

# ANZSI NEWSLETTER

Volume 5, number 10, November 2009

## From the President



I realise you have seen my name in the *ANZSI Newsletter* and will be familiar with my various roles within ANZSI, but I thought, as I am now President, I had better take this opportunity to introduce myself.

Like many indexers the path that led me to indexing was not straight. My first profession was as a mathematics teacher to years 7, 8, 9, 10 (the 'had to do maths' class and advanced class) and advanced year 11, with no repeated classes. Needless to say after a few years of this I needed a break. Instead of an overseas trip I did a Graduate Diploma in Librarianship. This led to work in academic and corporate engineering libraries. Working near Monash University I decided to complete a Master of Science in Statistics with my thesis on measuring quality in service industries. This catapulted me into the upper corporate level of a large firm with lots of interstate travel. This sounds glamorous, but plays havoc with your social and family life, as well as your health. So again after a few years decisions needed to be made.

I chose to return to libraries and worked in several scientific and medical libraries. I also chose to care for my elderly mother at home for as long as I could. In time I realised I would need to have a job that I could do from home so in 1998 I did Max McMaster's indexing course and worked towards registration. In 2004 I left full-time work and started as a Freelance Indexer, doing some part-time medical library work along the way. I am now a full-time indexer and have no plans of returning to 'normal' work hours or commuting more than a few paces to work.

As you will guess from my background I prefer to index in the scientific and medical area, but I stretch the definition of indexing to include indexing objects, such as collections of bookplates or medical instruments, and producing bibliographies on works of a particular author, or of old (read pre-1900) books. My greatest indexing achievement has been winning the 2009 Web Indexing Award for the ANZSI website index.

Outside work I enjoy travelling overseas and have been fortunate to tour extensively, usually on my own, through such places as, what was then Portuguese Timor, Malaysia, Java, Taipei, China, Estonia, Scandinavia, Portugal as well as the more usual parts of Western Europe and the UK. I am very keen on art and all sorts of crafts and will give anything a go at least once. I have made lace up shoes to fit, felted hats and scarfs, made patchwork quilts, done tapestry pictures and made

clothes. I always have some knitting on the go, and have learnt to knit without following a pattern. I dabble with making artists books and collect sophisticated pop-up books. I am a keen gardener and grow lots of different fruits and vegetables.

Enough about me, now ANZSI.

I am confident that those who attended *The Practice of Indexing*, ANZSI Conference, 2009 in Sydney will agree it was a great success. The positive energy that prevailed over the three days was amazing. As I spoke to people I casually asked if they were enjoying the Conference, always the response was a resounding YES. Often this was qualified with comments such as 'Best conference ever attended and that's not just indexing conferences', 'Wonderful', 'I have learnt so much!' 'That was such a beneficial session', 'the Indexing Clinic was so useful' – the favourable comments went on and on.

As I have mentioned I worked as a statistician, so dusting off that hat for a moment, such unsolicited comments mean 'very happy customers'. This doesn't just happen. It means there is a well-oiled machine ensuring everything runs smoothly behind the scenes. In this case that means the hard working and dedicated members of the Conference Organising Committee and NSW Branch Committee. So well done and a big THANK YOU for all your efforts.

It was obvious that lots of ideas were sown at the Conference and it will be fascinating to see how these ideas grow and develop. No doubt we will look back and say 'that came from the 2009 Conference'.

I realise you will be wondering already where the next Conference will be held. At this stage all I can say is there will definitely be an ANZSI Conference in 2011, but where and

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**Deadline for the January-February issue: 29 January**

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It is *your* newsletter, and we are totally dependent on contributions, both large and small, from members. Please contact the editor if you have any questions about the suitability of items for publication. The editor reserves the right to edit or abridge contributions.

Please send files via email in MS Word, .doc files or .rtf, but NOT .html or .pdf. And please, no images or footnotes embedded in Word files.

### Next deadline

29 January for the Jan–Feb 2010 issue.

### Graphics

Image files can be accepted in most common formats. **Do not embed images in text files.** Camera-ready art and photos can be scanned by the editor. Note that photos need to be clear, sharp and contrasty if they are to copy well in black and white.

### Advertising charges

Full page A\$175; half page A\$90; quarter page A\$35; full year 10 for the price of 8.

### Membership charges

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Institutional membership \$95.

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### The Indexer

(international indexing journal)

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<www.anzsi.org/site/Indexers\_available.asp>

(From the President, continued from previous page)

exactly when still needs to be finalised.

As far as the Council is concerned there are several ideas growing and developing to help ANZSI progress into the future. I urge all members to consider and discuss these ideas as they appear and Council will welcome all comments. After all it is YOUR professional organisation and Council's aim is to have 'satisfied members'.

### Future columns

While I realise there has been a tradition that each edition of the *ANZSI Newsletter* starts with 'From the President', the thought of another monthly *Newsletter* commitment doesn't exactly thrill me. So I thought perhaps the column title could be changed to

'News from Council' thus giving other Council members a chance to introduce themselves and shifting the focus of the column to highlighting the work and current topics of debate from Council, not just more of my ramblings. I should add at this point that I haven't had a chance to discuss this at Council, so perhaps in the New Year the column will still be 'From the President'.

Talking about New Year I realise that this is the last *Newsletter* for 2009 and so I take this opportunity to wish all members and their families a happy, safe and healthy festive season and look forward to 2010.

Mary Russell



Frances Lennie conducting a Cindex seminar at the conference (Photo Geraldine Triffitt)



Shirley Campbell (ACT Region Branch President) with Alison Sloper (Photo Geraldine Triffitt)

## Queensland Branch Christmas Party invitation

You and your partner are cordially invited to attend  
our 2009 Christmas Party

on Saturday 28 November 2009

Meet at 11.30 am for 12.00 Noon

Restaurant Tsb Carindale Hotel  
Carindale Street, CARINDALE Q 4152

Dress: Smart Casual

RSVP 21 November 2009  
to Vicki Law (Secretary)

0414 962 536 or <vicki.law4@bigpond.com>



# ACT Region Branch President's report 2008–09



The year 2008–09 began, in traditional fashion, with a Christmas BBQ brunch in Lennox Gardens near Lake Burley Griffin. While only a small number of members and partners and friends came along, it was a very pleasant way to wind up the calendar year. I hope a few more will come along this year.

Our next event has also become something of a tradition, our “Show and Tell”, held on 8 February in the National Library. It is always interesting to hear what other members have been doing, and the amazingly broad and varied jobs indexers do. A couple of new members came along and what they wanted to know was how to get started in indexing, which gave us the idea for another event later in the year.

On 30 March the Branch held a one-day Thesaurus Workshop. This was presented by Lynn Farkas and covered basic terminology, thesaurus components and structure, rules and standards for thesaurus construction, and practice in developing a thesaurus. It was well attended and got very good reports. It also added significantly to the Branch's finances. It was a great loss to the Society that Lynn felt unable to continue her membership, so we greatly appreciate her willingness to give us the benefit of her knowledge and experience.

Our next event was a visit to the Institute of Criminology, on 16 June. We were introduced to CINCH, the Institute's database. The excellent presentation by Janet Smith, the Principal Librarian, was followed by a lively question-time. All in all, a very interesting and informative visit to one of the lesser known of Canberra's national institutions.

On 22 July we met again in the National library to try and

answer the question raised at the “Show and Tell” meeting: how to get indexing jobs. This immediately expanded into “how I got into indexing in the first place”. Many varied stories were told. There were a couple of editors present and Indexers Available and Registration were explained to them.

No events are usually held in August– September as it is the busiest time of the year for indexers in Canberra – annual report season. It can start in August but, from my own experience, this year it didn't start until September and has gone on well into October. Also there is the Conference in October and the Branch AGM as well.

So quite a busy and enjoyable year.

As for Council matters, which took up a lot of time at Committee meetings, our frustrations continued. It appeared to be nigh on impossible to get an adequate answer to our questions, or any answer. In regard to the matter of database indexing registration, the Committee, which includes a number of very experienced database indexers, formulated their response to the discussion paper put out by the Council and I passed it on to the Council. In addition, Sherrey Quinn prepared a detailed commentary on the discussion paper, pointing out, among other things, some factual errors and the omission of any mention of a paper by Sandra Henderson. When we saw the article in the *Newsletter*, it was clear everything we had said had been ignored.

Then there was the issue of capitation. Each Branch receives annually a proportion of the membership fees. We – that is, all branches – were, without consultation, told that we would not be receiving our capitation this year unless we presented to the Council audited financial reports. We in the ACT estimated that it would cost at least \$500 to get our

*(continued on page 5)*

## Branch activities

<i>Date &amp; time</i>	<i>Organiser</i>	<i>Name of activity</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Contact details</i>
Tues 17 Nov 5.30 for 6.00 pm	ACT Branch	Feedback from the ANZSI 2009 Conference	Friends Lounge, National Library of Australia	Eleanor Whelan +61 2 6257 7749 or <Eleanor.Whelan@bigpond.com>
Saturday 28 Nov	Queensland Branch	Christmas Party	Restaurant Tsb Carindale Hotel Carindale Street, Carindale	RSVP 21 November to Vicki Law (Secretary) 0414 962 536 or <vicki.law4@bigpond.com>
Sun 29 Nov 12.30 for 1.00 pm	NSW Branch	End-of-year social	3 Searl St, Petersham 2049	RSVP Frances Paterson <olivegroveindexing@bigpond.com>
Wed 2 Dec 6.00 pm	Vic Branch	The VIC Indexing Christmas Carols	Kew Holy Trinity Anglican Church	Details at <www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=100>
Sunday 6 Dec 9.30-12 noon.	ACT Branch	Branch Christmas BBQ	By the lake in Lennox Gardens	Eleanor Whelan +61 2 6257 7749 or <Eleanor.Whelan@bigpond.com>
Mon 14 Dec 7.00 pm	Vic Branch	Festive season get together	5 Kingston St, East Malvern	Details at <www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=117> Enquiries to Max McMaster 9500-8715
Wed 3 Feb 2010 6.00 pm	Vic Branch	The VIC Surprise meeting	Kew Holy Trinity Anglican Church	Details at <www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=120>
4-6 June 2010	Vic Branch	Nuggets of Indexing Seminar	Sovereign Hill Ballarat	Details at <www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=118>

# From the literature and other thoughts



## #ANZSI2009

I have headed this section with the conference hashtag, used on Twitter to enable more precise searches for topics of interest. Used by very few of us, however.

The conference was terrific. Apart from a few minor technological glitches everything ran beautifully. Thanks to Madeleine Davis, Alan Walker, Sue Flaxman, Pamela Johnstone, Elisabeth Thomas, Frances Paterson, Sherrey Quinn, Caroline Jones and the NSW Branch, along with supporters from NSW, interstate, New Zealand, Iran, China, the US and Canada. What a wonderful group we had.

My involvement included my Website Indexing course on Thursday, and the Education Committee meeting on Thursday night (first time I met the chair, Michael Ramsden). On Friday I spoke on indexing rules, and on Friday night Alan Walker launched my new book, *The Indexing Companion Workbook: Book Indexing*. I dressed in orange to match the book cover – including jewellery and orange fingernails (not my usual colour!). Jon, my sister Carrie, and my daughter, Jenny, set out the snacks – the menu for which was indexed (<<http://tinyurl.com/LaunchMenuIndex>>). A heartfelt thankyou to Alan for launching the book, and to all attendees for positive feedback and for buying it. A lot of one's soul goes into writing a book, and to feel that it fills a need is most rewarding. I am especially grateful to the experienced indexers who bought the book.

My Saturday highlight was the social networking panel with Tracy Harwood and Jan Wright, along with the newbies lunch. On Sunday morning I walked with Jenny to the art gallery where there is a terrific installation by Tatzu Nishi, who built a bedroom and living room around two existing sculptures (<<http://kollektor.com.au/?p=1315>>). Makes you see things in a whole new light. Finally, we ended the weekend with an excellent tour of the Australian Museum, organised by Caroline Jones.

## Google failure

I did a search for 'blue mountains acat'. ACAT stands for 'Aged Care Assessment Team' and no, it's not for me, despite my recent birthday.

The first two hits were spot on. The third was retrieved for the phrase 'the use of a Dwelling House as a "Cat Shelter"', the fifth for 'may lawfully seize a cat if', the sixth for 'I Wish I Was A Cat', the ninth for 'What makes a "Cat Head Biscuit" so special', then back to ACAT Orange for the tenth hit. Interesting algorithm. It makes sense to break words such as

'groundwater', but perhaps the phrase as searched should be given a higher priority than it was here.

## Google success

Google has some nice features for search refinement which I have only recently become aware of. If you select 'Show options' just under the search box you can limit searches to Videos, Blogs, Forums, and Reviews, and you can specify recency of results. You can also see Related searches, and choose to see more, or less, shopping sites. (They are even grammatically correct, as the link says 'Fewer shopping sites').

They have a 'Wonder wheel' which provides a visual display of your search term and related terms. Clicking on a related term then displays *its* related terms. Unfortunately the search is keyword-based rather than semantic. For example, a search for 'indexing' shows a related term 'society of indexers'. In turn it shows related terms including 'Canberra society of indexers', which has been selected because of the page title 'Canberra Society of Editors and Australian Society of Indexers'. It is an interesting tool to explore, but not yet sophisticated enough to be of much value for retrieval.

## Google BookSearch

'Google's Book Search: A Disaster for Scholars', by Geoffrey Nunberg in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (August 31, 2009, <<http://chronicle.com/article/Googles-Book-Search-A/48245>>) highlights numerous bibliographic problems

with the Google Book Search database. One example is the inclusion of 527 books about the Internet supposedly published before 1950.

## Indexing in China

The September issue of *The Indexer*, guest-edited by the China Society of Indexers, provides a broad range of articles about indexing in China, giving a sense of the history and state of the profession there. As with our Iranian visitors, it is always interesting to see indexing in a different political context. For example, in the biography of Wan Guoding, it is said 'For him, the Index Movement held indexing and the May Fourth Movement in a single embrace.' (Broadly, the May Fourth Movement refers to an anti-imperialist, cultural, and political movement in the period 1915-1921, also called the New Culture Movement).

A few ANZSI members supply content for the 'Indexes Reviewed' section, and it is nice to see the Australian-sounding 'Wulguru' alongside the British-sounding 'Pulham St Mary' in the contributor's list.

## Cited authors

John Bealle has written a detailed analysis of when to index cited authors in 'On citational voicing', published in *Indexing* (continued on next page)



Alan Walker launches Glenda's book (Photo Geraldine Triffitt)

*(From the Literature, continued from previous page)*

*in the Heartland* (v.12 n.1 Feb 2008, <web.spsp.net/jbealle/heartland/NewsletterFeb08.pdf>).

It is not clear whether he is talking about an index of cited authors, in which case I would index all of them, or the inclusion of cited authors in a general subject index, in which case the decisions are more difficult, and his suggestions give a framework for decision making.

### **An index to character**

From Mary Coe: Just came across this quote from Abigail van Buren (writer of 'Dear Abby' column in the US), which isn't about book indexes per se but is good nevertheless:

"The best index to a person's character is:

(a) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and

(b) how he treats people who can't fight back."

Mary writes 'I never thought about behaviour as an 'index' to character before, but I suppose it could be a good entry point!'

### **Finding the right words for things**

Often in indexing you search for the best word to describe a concept. Ideally it should come from the book, but sometimes you have to think hard to find the best word. I suspect that often it doesn't come at all, and that indexes could be better if we had a better mental and verbal map of the subject area.

So much information retrieval these days depends on typing keywords, which usually means you have to know the name of the things you are searching for. How frustrating it is when you don't. For example, we saw a bright orange metal pyramid on top of a hill next to the M7 freeway, and wondered what it was for. Searching for 'big orange pyramid' didn't help, and we couldn't see it on Google StreetView. Solution – ask an expert. My nephew knew immediately what we meant, and said that these cones mark the highest point in an area.

Similarly, I like to keep my papers together in a firm plastic folder which is open at two sides. Much easier to request now that I know they are called 'letter files'.

I am connected on Facebook to sword-swallower Dan Meyer. Following a link on his page I went to the site of 'Tooth N Nail', a specialist in the 'impalement arts'. What a wonderful phrase! It almost makes sword swallowing, knife throwing at human targets, glass walking, and bed of nails sound like mainstream activities.

*Glenda Browne*

## **ACT Region members**

### **Two events not to be missed!**

You will have an opportunity for feedback from the ANZSI 2009 Conference, in the Friends Lounge of the National Library of Australia, on Tuesday 17 November, at 5.30 for 6.00–7.30pm.

And the ACT Region Branch will hold its traditional Christmas BBQ by the lake in Lennox Gardens, on Sunday 6 December, from 9.30 to 12 noon.

*(ACT Branch President's report, continued from page 3)*

financial report audited and so, since we only receive around \$400 in capitation, our Branch would soon go broke. We informed the Council of this. Next we were told that all that was needed was for someone not on the Committee to act as a 'scrutineer' of the finances – any Joe Blow off the street or somebody's mate?! This was then qualified as someone with some accounting knowledge, whatever that means. And what was the motivation for this? Fear of litigation. The Council said it was to protect the members of the Committees. What, in fact, they wanted was a scapegoat, someone to blame if the Council/Committees made bad decisions. It will not work, of course. The Committee signs off on the financial reports when it votes to accept them and so bears the responsibility. Auditing the accounts is a very good idea but is too expensive for a small organisation like ours. And, in any case, the purpose of auditing is to protect the members' money, not the members of the Committee.

This fear of litigation was what was behind the push for incorporation that I reported on last year. This year there has been no progress on that front, probably because of the difficulty of covering the New Zealand Branch, and I've heard that, in fact, it has been abandoned. There was a development which was a spin-off from the move to incorporation. Some Victorian members wanted to form a separate organisation which could be incorporated. However, I have heard that this too has been abandoned, which is good, since if it had come to fruition it would have destroyed the Society.

A few months ago someone came up with the great idea of setting up a discussion page on the website for Council members. This would allow those of us who are not in Victoria to present our views and questions on Council issues. The President, John Simkin, made the further excellent suggestion that if we wanted action taken, we should put our ideas into the form of motions to be voted on by the Council. This was progress. But the Council had neither the will nor the skill to put it into action. What was put on the discussion page was first totally ignored, then cursorily treated and finally restrictions were imposed (for example, no issue raised on the discussion page would be debated by the Council unless someone present raised it) which made the whole great idea pointless. It could have worked. It could work well, with a little bit of effort and dedication.

Finally, I'd like to thank the members of the Branch Committee for all their work on behalf of our members over the past year. They are a great group of people and it has been a pleasure to work with them. In particular I'd like to thank our Secretary, Eleanor Whelan, who carries the main burden of organisation, for the excellent job she has done. I'd also like to thank Edyth Binkowski for her hospitality in letting us use her home for our meetings, and also for writing the reports of our activities for the Newsletter. And finally I'd like to thank Sandra Henderson for all her work for members over many years on the Committee, particularly as Treasurer, since she will not be standing for election to the Committee this year. Thank you, Sandra, and best wishes.

*Barry Howarth*

## Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers' Medal 2009

The Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers' Medal is offered annually to the most outstanding index to a book or periodical compiled in Australia or New Zealand.

This year eight entries for the medal were received. The entries came from indexers in four Australian states or territories and from New Zealand. One extensive name index was excluded from detailed consideration, on the grounds that it did not provide scope for the indexer to demonstrate expertise in analysing and expressing complex subject relationships.

The judges considered seven substantial and high quality indexes as candidates for the medal. All were of sufficient length to deal with complex subject matter, and showed a grasp of the language appropriate to the texts, some of which were scientifically or culturally highly specialised. All showed the indexers' ability to match the text with readers' vocabulary.

In awarding the medal, the judges look for an index which goes beyond being competent, or even impeccable for its particular purpose. The important word in the requirements is 'outstanding'. We look for an index in which the indexer faced difficult challenges and met them in an elegant and admirable manner.

This year the judges found such an index in a remarkable reference work, entitled *A handbook of Aboriginal languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory*, by Jim Wafer and Amanda Lissarague, published in 2008.

The book is the culmination of a large collaborative project, and was inspired by the linguistic partnerships forged between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people over the last 200 and more years. It provides a guide to the Aboriginal languages of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, and to the current state of information about them. One aim is to show which dialects belong together as variant forms of the same language, and which languages belong together as related members of a group; another aim is to provide information about the current state of these languages, and a guide to resources available for language revitalisation, including a bibliography.

The chapters include a geographical sequence, as well as information on contact languages, sign languages, terms used in kin classification, and placenames. There is a word-list for each language, with an account of the sources used in compiling it, and an overview of the language's phonology. It is a thorough, carefully organised, well edited and beautifully produced reference work, assembling a tremendous quantity of information in over 800 pages.

The challenges facing the indexer of such a work are considerable. The index aims to help users find information quickly about specific languages, as well as about the people and groups working on those languages, and the main

communities where those languages are or were spoken. Users can search for a language either by name or by location, and the index must therefore include not only the preferred spelling of all the language names, but also many alternative spellings; users who know at least one of the various ways a language's name has been spelled, including English names for the languages, can find the index entry for the language. Users unsure of the language name or its spelling can search by location, with the help of a map, if necessary.

The index uses a number of devices to help users. There is a long introductory note to the index, which may appear daunting to first-time, non-specialist users, but is in fact extremely clear and helpful. Typographical devices, such as bold type and italics indicate the main entries for a language or language group, the page numbers for the word-list for the language, and for the principal entry for kin classification terminology of any language, as well as the location of relevant maps.

While the names of languages and locations are prominent in the 29-page index, it also includes a great deal of detailed subject analysis, particularly in the sub-headings. This is a complex index to a complex reference text, yet it is easy for non-specialists to use and find relevant information.

The judges were impressed by the introductory notes to the index, the use of bold and italic type for special features, the excellent subject analysis and the cross-referencing. Overall, the manner in which the index interacted with the book demonstrated the considerable thought the indexer has put into it. The book is likely to be used largely from the index, and the functionality is very high. The judges are therefore pleased to award the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Medal for 2009 to the indexer of this work, Frances Paterson.

The Society also congratulates the publisher of this well edited and beautifully produced book, Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative, of Nambucca Heads, NSW, which publishes dictionaries, grammars and language learning materials on Aboriginal languages. Proceeds from sales contribute to Muurrbay's publishing activities and language revitalisation programs. We recognise the effort that a small publisher must make to produce such a large and complex reference book and to support and maintain such high standards of production, editing and indexing. We are pleased to present the publisher with a certificate to mark its association with this medal-winning index.

The panel of judges this year consisted of Alan Walker, indexer (convener); Garry Cousins, indexer and librarian; and Dr Jeremy Fisher, Executive Director of the Australian Society of Authors, an experienced compiler, editor and user of indexes. All three judges are previous winners of the Medal.

*Alan Walker*



*Alan Walker presents the Medal to Frances Paterson  
(Photo Geraldine Triffitt)*



John Simkin (President 2007-09) with Alan Walker  
(Photo Vicki Law)



Max McMaster and Mary Russell (President 2009 - )  
(Photo Margaret Findlay)

## New Honorary Life Members

Two new Honorary Life Memberships were conferred at the ANZSI Conference dinner in Sydney. Those honoured were Alan Walker and Max McMaster, two of the most influential and long-standing members whose contribution to AusSI/ANZSI and to the profession of indexing is great as many members who have benefited from their teaching, mentoring and overall helpfulness will testify. Although skill as indexers is not one of the criteria for this award, both of these recipients are at the highest level in this regard. Between them they have earned six medals for the 'most outstanding index to a book or periodical' and six highly commended.

The procedure for electing Honorary Life Members is set down in the constitution. As part of the procedure the nominators present a statement of the member's achievements. The statements accompanying the present nominations are

displayed as citations on the ANZSI website at [www.anzsi.org/site/life\\_member\\_award.asp](http://www.anzsi.org/site/life_member_award.asp). I recommend that members read these citations.

Indexers, many of whom work as freelancers, have interesting and sometimes unusual other interests. The citation for Alan Walker brings to light his talents as an actor, singer and host. Although not mentioned in the citation Max has a continuing interest as a referee for Swimming Australia. Both have an enduring interest in indexing and obvious pleasure in the company of other indexers. I once heard Alan remark that he hopes to be still indexing when he is 85 and, in Max's case, the 1 650 book indexes which he has to his credit indicate that he must enjoy the job. May they long continue to do so to their and our benefit.

John E. Simkin

## NSW Branch President's report 2008-09



This year the ANZSI NSW Branch Committee consisted of Glenda Browne, Mary Coe, Lorraine Doyle, Sue Flaxman and Caroline Jones. The geographical distances between each member – in Sydney proper as well as south and west of the city – has meant that again, most of our meetings have been conducted by teleconference. A huge thank you to Lorraine Doyle and Thomson Reuters for kindly allowing the Committee to use their teleconferencing system.

The NSW Branch had 43 financial members at close of business on 16 September 2009.

### Branch activities

Following the success of informal gatherings held in 2007, the NSW Committee continued this type of informal gathering and exchange of ideas and experiences again for an end-of-year lunch hosted by Glenda Browne and Jon Jermy in Blaxland in the lower Blue Mountains, in November 2008. It provided a

great opportunity to relax and examine the year gone by with kindred spirits.

A Legal Indexing Workshop presented by Alan Walker, followed by a Panel Discussion was held on Saturday 27 September 2008 at the NSW Writers' Centre. It was a lovely venue set in beautiful grounds. The afternoon Panel Discussion and question time included a mix of experienced legal editors, librarians and indexers and proved highly successful. A review of the workshop was published in the *ANZSI Newsletter* (November 2008).

A Basic Book Indexing Course presented by Glenda Browne was held over two Saturdays, 14 and 21 March 2009, at Thomson Reuters – again it was very successful. A review of the course was published in the *ANZSI Newsletter* (April 2009).

A visit to the State Library of NSW was organised for Branch members and local members of the Independent Scholars in the evening on 29 July 2009. 'Building great

*(continued overleaf)*

*(NSW Branch President's report, continued from previous page)*

collections' was the theme presented by Paul Brunton (Senior Curator, Mitchell Library). It was held in the beautiful, former (1910-88) Reading Room in the Mitchell Library. It was a very informative and witty talk and an account was published in the *ANZSI Newsletter* (October 2009).

### **Liaison with ANZSI Council**

The NSW Branch has responded to a number of Council proposals and papers since last September, covering the proposed incorporation of the Society, auditing of annual Branch financial statements, Council procedures for dealing with papers, mentoring, annual payments to branches, an award for annual report indexing and database indexing registration. There is still ongoing discussion on some of these topics.

The NSW Branch also put forward two further discussion papers for Council's consideration this year: 'Payments to ANZSI members for services' and 'Funding for attendance by Council members at the ANZSI AGM'. Both

recommendations were rejected by Council. A summary of the NSW Branch view supporting both measures was published in the *ANZSI Newsletter* (June 2009).

An ongoing concern of the NSW Branch has been to find ways of operating effectively with the Council which is mainly based in Victoria. To this end, the NSW Branch was pleased with Council's initiative for a Council member area on the ANZSI website for discussion and comment between all Council members before each meeting. The NSW Branch will also provide input on Council's current paper on the use of Skype to facilitate meetings.

As is always the case, members of the NSW Branch inevitably end up either formally part of the Conference Committee or informally helping all year. My sincere thanks to the NSW Committee for all their commitment and work for the NSW Branch and conference this year.

*Madeleine Davis*



*At the NSW AGM, held at the Golden Cinnamon Restaurant, Chinatown, Sydney on 23 September. Left to right – Dr Trevor Matthews, Helen Enright, Alan Walker, Sue Flaxman, Elisabeth Thomas, Madeleine Davis, Mary Coe, Frances Paterson, Glenda Browne. (Photo Lorraine Doyle)*

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## **Indexers overseas in 2010 . . .**

Do you feel that a study tour might be just the thing for next year? We already have news of these professional conferences:

- The American Society for Indexers will hold their annual conference 'Indexing Central' 13–15 May in Minneapolis.
- The Indexing Society of Canada will hold their annual conference 26–27 May in Montreal.
- The Society of Indexers Annual Conference will be in Middelburg, The Netherlands. 'The Challenging Future of Indexing' will be held at Roosevelt Academy, University College, Middelburg, The Netherlands, 29 September – 1 October. Roosevelt Academy is the International Honors College of Utrecht University.
- SI Conference organisers alert ANZSI members to the Frankfurt Book Fair 6–10 October, where the *DNI* (*Deutsches Netzwerk der Indexer* – the German Indexers Society) meet.

Links to further information are available via <[www.anzsi.org/site/conference\\_papers.asp](http://www.anzsi.org/site/conference_papers.asp)>.

# Victorian Branch Annual Report 2009



We have completed another busy year which has culminated in some interesting new activities for members. The Victorian Branch aims to present a calendar of activities which broaden our indexing knowledge as well as providing opportunities to socialize and our program reflects this.

Our membership currently stands at 71.

Training sessions in a range of indexing levels were held throughout the year, interspersed with those on specific areas such as journal and report indexing.

We have enjoyed a variety of visits and presentations. In March we spent an afternoon at the Melbourne Museum of Printing where we learnt the significance of terms such as lower case and linoprint whilst attempting not to cause a printer's pie!

In May Madeleine Davis and Max McMaster presented the special challenges of indexing biographies. Indexing under first names was one approach suggested when faced with multiple references to a well known author.

We were delighted to learn in May that our whizzbang web magician, Mary Russell, had been awarded the 2009 Web Indexing Special Interest Award for her webwork. Wow! Well deserved! Words cannot express how much Mary's professionalism and enthusiasm is appreciated by us all.

May is the month where much more happened. Our distinctive promotional bookmark, initially designed by Max, was launched. This continues to be distributed to a variety of organizations, publications and events such as the Melbourne Writers' Festival.

Vic Branch offered a session of indexing during family history week. This was well received by a small but enthusiastic group of participants, who may or may not have considered themselves to have been dragooned!

In July we enjoyed a night visit to the Johnston Collection, learning not only about Regency and Georgian tastes in the glow of the chandeliers but also anecdotes relating to Mr Johnston himself.

July also saw the launching of the Victorian Indexing Club – The VIC. The aim is to enable members as well as anyone else who is interested to meet in a social setting. Advice on indexing matters can be given on a one to one basis, followed by a presentation on a wide variety of topics. There is no obligation to attend but the opportunity to continue the evening at a local restaurant makes The VIC a very pleasant social occasion. The VIC is being trialled for six months.

The year concluded with the conference which was successfully held last weekend. The next VIC meeting will present some of the topics discussed in Sydney.

I would like to thank the existing committee, Mary, Max, Nikki, Jane, Margaret and Teresa for all their hard work during the past year. I have very much appreciated everyone's energy and support, which has helped to make the year such a success. Together we wish Mary well as she assumes the President's position at Council and Max as he too joins the Council. We are so pleased that both Mary and Max will still be members of the Vic Branch Committee. Thanks must also go to Max for generously hosting our meetings.

We look forward to another exciting year.

*Beverley Mills*

## News from New Zealand Branch

October 5 began well for the New Zealand Branch with a full-day advanced book indexing course, held at the historic Turnbull House, the birthplace of New Zealand's national library, organised and conducted by Tordis Flath with assistance from Robin Briggs. The Branch's annual general meeting followed, attended by 12 members – the best attendance at an AGM since the Branch was founded in 2004. Most were locals, with one from north of Auckland and one determined member on crutches.

In the AGM Robin Briggs was re-elected President, Tordis Flath became Vice-president and Julie Daymond-King, Jill Gallop and Susan Brookes are Secretary, Treasurer and mentoring co-ordinator respectively.

The freelance register is about to go to publishers, and we discussed hosting an ANZSI conference, perhaps in 2013. There is also a proposal for us to hold an indexing workshop or presentation at the annual conference of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand next year, and we set up a sub-committee to explore this and present a framework.

More details at <[www.anzsi.org/site/nwz.asp](http://www.anzsi.org/site/nwz.asp)>

*Robin Briggs*



*Madeleine Davis at the conference with Dr Roya Baradar from Iran (Photo Geraldine Triffitt)*

# Indexing fiction – potential advantages of indexed fiction for academic study

Jane Purton – The Victorian Indexing Club (The VIC), 2 September 2009

## What is fiction?

When it comes to academic study, fiction is generally thought of as classical literature: authors such as Jane Austen, the Brontës, and George Eliot. However, a look at any curriculum at a high school or university will reveal fiction from both ends of the spectrum and everywhere in between. There are graphic novels, or comics, Mills and Boon romances, thrillers, good modern literature, classics, plays and poetry.

## Who studies fiction?

One imagines that fiction is studied by academics and students in university arts faculties, in literature and writing courses. However, fiction is read and analysed in a variety of departments. Take for example *The English Patient* (Ondaatje). There are studies on this novel in the journals *History and Theory* (Adhikari, 2002) and *Literature & Theology* (Jasper & Klemm, 2004), articles in nursing journals on the nurse-patient relationship and the representation of nursing in *The English Patient*, and a psychological study entitled *Diagnosing The English Patient: Contributions to Understanding the Schizoid Fantasies of Being Skinless and of Being Buried Alive* (Doidge, 1999). Another potential market for indexed fiction is the literary societies whose members also study fiction in an academic fashion.

## Mode of studying fiction

Most general readers rip through a story then toss it aside, never to pick it up again. However, the academic and student, both undergraduate and postgraduate, are required to develop a much closer relationship with their books. They read and reread the text, looking for meaning, studying themes, analysing the language and taking part in discussions. They spend an inordinate amount of time flipping through pages on the elusive quest for important passages. Imagine trying to find a pearl hidden within the pages of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Imagine having an index!

There *are* indexes to fiction. Indexing fiction, although uncommon, is not new. Dr Johnson encouraged Samuel Richardson to index the third edition of *Clarissa* in 1751, after which he indexed *Pamela* (1742) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1754). (Bradley, 1989)

## Types of fiction indexes

According to Hazel Bell, there are three major types of indexes constructed for fiction:

- The exhaustive consolidated indexes undertaken for serious works, often multi-volumed.
- Well-regarded individual works that are indexed like biographies or histories.
- Indexes intended to amuse. (Bell, 1991)

Two examples of the latter found on the shelves of an academic library include *My Strange Quest for Mesonge* (Bradbury) and *Sweet Deserts* (Ellmann).

Judy Bachelor termed the index to the former an 'anti-index' because the signifier refuses to relate to the signified, and the latter a 'para-index' because it is a guide to its subtext and personal connotations rather than its topics. (Bell, 2003). Many entries are minus locators, eg. 'washing machine, forget it' (Ellmann, 1989)

Unless the researcher was after a bit of fun or studying the meaning of strange indexes, these are not much use in an academic setting.

## A useful index in an academic setting

Graham Jones, an academic at Monash University, believes an index would be very useful to researchers. He wrote a paper on Proust's novel

(in relation to Deleuze's reading of it) and found the index very helpful. Proust's novel in twelve volumes, *Remembrance of Things Past*, has been indexed several times, albeit post-publication in reprints. According to Bradley, some of the best indexes to classic novels have been created for French works published by Gallimard in the Pleiade edition. The index to the Pleiade edition of *Remembrance of Things Past* is in two parts and lists names of persons, and places and inhabitants. (Bradley, 1989)

Proust's work has also been indexed by Spalding (1952), and Kilmartin (1983) who made use of the French index to the 1954 Gallimard edition (Mirabile, 1997). Terence Kilmartin's *Guide to Proust: Remembrance of Things Past* (Chatto and Windus, 1983), is more of a guide than an index, though there are separate indexes for fictional characters, real persons, places and themes. (Bradley, 1989)

Another work in the series is Balzac's twelve volume *La Comédie Humaine*, which has a large index in four parts: for fictional persons, real, historical and mythological persons, cities, and works of fictional persons. (Bradley, 1989)

The indexes to Proust's and Balzac's novels, though restricted to names of people, places, and works, are comprehensive and indicate that the publisher recognised that there is a need for indexes in large classical works. (Bradley, 1989)

Readers of Anthony Powell's twelve volume novel, *A Dance to the Music of Time*, have benefited from the publication of Hilary Spurling's *Handbook to Anthony Powell's Music of Time*. This substantial work has indexes for books, paintings and places. Simon Cooper of Monash University had this to say about the usefulness of indexes to large works of fiction: 'Certainly when reading Powell whose narrative seems to rely on coincidences – running into the same characters over and over – it is helpful to go back and get the context for the last time they met. One could also argue that – given the crazy time-poor lives that most of us lead – indexes provide a useful way of picking up the continuity if we are reading a work intermittently.'

For an index to be beneficial to a researcher it should be both denotative and connotative. The former deals with facts; names, places, events, and could be compared to an index for non-fiction. This type of indexing has earlier been the most typical for fiction. The indexes to the A.C. Black editions of Scott's Waverley novels, and to Jane Austen's *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice* are examples of this type. (Bradley, 1989)

Connotative indexing refers to indexing aspects that are generic to fiction, the themes and symbols used in fictional works. Judith A Ranta believes that indexing for fiction in an academic environment must be multi-dimensional, and give access to abstract and concrete levels of meaning. Scholars interpret works of fiction nowadays based on different systems of value which means that the index needs to reflect this. (Saarti, 1999)

According to Hazel Bell, serious, lengthy and complex fiction is as deserving of an index – as an adjunct to enable the location of passages and collate dispersed references to the same theme – as any other form of writing. (Mirabile, 1997)

Bell has indexed A.S. Byatt's novels for her own interest and pleasure. A.S. Byatt herself writes that she 'can't persuade publishers that an index doesn't look like boasting/prentension/offputting academicism'. (Bell, 1991)

George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the Clarendon Press edition (1984), is a good example of a novel that has been prepared for

*(continued on next page)*

## (Indexing fiction, continued from previous page)

academic study. An introduction and annotations take up thirty per cent of the book, and there are two indexes, one for the introduction, the other for Orwell's text.

The index to Orwell's text is more comprehensive than most indexes to fiction. According to Bradley, the text is written like non-fiction and is thus suited to indexing. In addition to proper names, it contains both concrete and abstract subjects, a feature that differentiates it from other indexes to fiction. (Bradley, 1989)

Literary societies favour separately published indexes to a group of books by an author over back-of-book indexes. Some literary societies create their own indexes, for example, the Dorothy L. Sayers Society. (Bradley, 1989)

Detailed historical novels would benefit from an index, particularly if a bibliography and references were included. This type of fiction looks more like non-fiction and some readers may mistake the characters and events for historical fact. An example of this type, which does *not* contain an index, is Robert Graves's *Claudius the God* (1934). (Bradley, 1989)

Many well-regarded modern novels selected for academic study, while lacking a back-of-book index, are furnished with very useful indexes post-publication as separate entities by indexers who see it as a task that must be done. These are often published on the world wide web. Some examples of these include indexes for *The English Patient* (Mirabile, n.d.), *The Great Gatsby* (Murphy, 2002), and *The Catcher in the Rye* (*The Catcher in the Rye Book Index*, n.d.).

Some modern exceptions with useful (as opposed to jokey) back-of-book indexes include *Life: a User's Manual* (Perec), *The Sinking of the Odradek Stadium* (Mathews) and *Brilliant Creatures* (James).

In an interesting turnaround, Tom Murphy asked his students to index a novel and the poetry of Emily Dickinson. The result was that the students recognised, organised and interrelated key words and essential themes. (Murphy, 2003) This reflects Hazel Bell's view that indexing becomes a form of literary criticism. (Bell, 1991)

### Factors against indexing fiction

Authors in general appear to be against the concept of indexing fiction for fear that the 'magic' would be lost. One university lecturer considered that having an index to even classical literature would give students the wrong attitude to it. One must never lose sight of the fact that it is a serious work of art and an index would detract from this. In addition, students might only read parts of the book rather than the whole. (Bradley, 1989)

The latter fear seems to be rife among academics. Three academics consulted thought that students (undergraduates) would read the index rather than the novel, or just read parts they looked up in the index and thus miss the context of the whole novel.

One academic raised the issue of what is indexed and how. Who decides what is important and what gets left out, and how much supporting context is included.

These issues are faced by all indexers of fiction. Iris Murdoch thought that the indexing of fiction would involve an element of literary criticism, such as in the case of symbols. Hazel Bell disagrees and states that symbols should be indexed as things as such, and not as one might interpret them. Ransley indexed *The Scarlet Letter* (Hawthorne) as a form of literary interpretation and appears to have used critical literature on Hawthorne to help draw his conclusions. Deciding what connotative headings to index can be hard without the use of critical literature. (Badman, 2003)

Hazel Bell wonders how anyone can attempt literary criticism without indexing the work beforehand. (Bell, 1998)

Publishers point to the cost as a disincentive to indexing fiction. However, classics sell very well for publishers. Most of these are read in academic settings and with so many out of copyright, the index would add only a small cost to an inexpensive printing. (Badman, 2003)

### Conclusion

On balance, there is potential for indexing fiction for academic purposes. At least the more complex fiction; A.S. Byatt rather than Tom Clancy, though if Tom is on the curriculum, why not? Ideally, the index should be both denotative and connotative, but even the former would be helpful for it would allow the reader to locate persons and events.

However, there is very little hope that fiction will be indexed across the board. The academic world is a small one. The best prospect is for indexes to be created post-publication for books that are deemed worthy of academic study.

There are very few novels with back-of-book indexes and the most useful of these have been created for reprints. These, plus the separately published indexes such as those created for *The English Patient*, appear to offer the best prospects for indexing fiction.

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