

J. Kagger

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VOLUME 2

The next meeting of the Society will be held on
Wednesday, May 31st

at Committee Room, State Library of Victoria
at 8 p.m.

Sherry will be served at 7.30 p.m.

The programme will include:

a description of the indexing activities of the
State Library of Victoria, by
Members of the staff from the Research Department,
Ia Trobe Library and Art, Music and Performing
Arts Library.

* Constitution Amendment - See page 2.

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AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

Office bearers 1977-78:

President: Clyde Garrow, CSIRO, 314 Albert Street,
East Melbourne.

Vice-President: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh.

Hon. Secretary: Jean Hagger, Unit 4, 2 Erne Street,
Mont Albert. 3127.

Hon. Treasurer: Joyce Korn, Librarian, Australian Society of
Accountants, 49 Exhibition Street,
Melbourne. 3000.

Committee members: Coryl Muntz, CSIRO.

Vera Wicks, Brotherhood of St. Lawrence.

Jean Golding, Monash University Library.

Newsletter editor: John Simkin, City of Moorabbin Library,
161 Jasper Road, Bentleigh,
Victoria, 3204.

Journal liason officer (*The Indexer*): Coryl Muntz, CSIRO

Correction

In the last issue of the *Newsletter*, Volume 1, numbers 5 & 6
December 1977, the authors of the review of *Legal resources book* were
omitted. They were Penny Cook and Peter Fraser, from the State
Library of Victoria.

Editor.

* Constitution amendment

Notice of motion for the following amendment to the
Constitution was given by Vera Wicks at the March 1978
general meeting -

- That the following words be added to the Constitution
under Clause 3C:

"Members whose subscriptions are more than two years
in arrears shall be deemed to have resigned."

This motion will be put to the May general meeting.

March 1978 meeting of the
Australian Society of Indexers

reported by Joan Haughton

The topic for the Society's meeting, held at CSIRO East Melbourne on 29th March was: Indexers - their relationship with authors, publishers, editors. This is a summary of the discussion between members and a panel of three. These were Fran Church and Bridget Everett of EdInk and Bob Schonfield editor of the Australian Journal of Chemistry. Bob sat in for the announced speaker Basil Walby of CSIRO, who was overseas.

John Simkin as chairman of the programme committee asked the panel to outline their careers.

Fran Church started work as a technical writer for an electronics firm - E.M.I. (Aust) Pty. Ltd. in Sydney. She also worked overseas in the U.K. for the same firm. On her return to Sydney she taught two years at school and then went to the Jacaranda Press in Queensland. Next, she worked for A.S.E.P. (Australian Science Education Project) and later for Cheshires in editorial positions.

Bridget Everett started as a librarian, first with the A.B.C. then at Xavier College. Later came part-time research for Radio Australia, with some part-time work in the A.B.C. library; after that to Heinemann (Australia) as senior editor and production manager; and then to the Melbourne University Press as publisher's editor and to Cheshires as senior editor. It was there that she and Fran met. When Cheshires was taken over by Longmans they both left to form their own business - Editors Incorporated - shortened to EdInk.

Bob Schonfield came to Australia in 1949 and did research work in industrial chemistry with CSIRO for six years. He confessed that his underlying literary ambition helped him to make an exit from research into writing and to becoming editor of the journal.

The panel were asked questions. Would you please outline the procedures in the publication of a book?

In the educational field, manuscripts are largely solicited, say 97%. The publisher will approach authors or potential authors well known in their field and suggest the theme.

In the general field also, a big proportion are solicited but this mainly excludes novels, autobiography, children's books and poetry. It was estimated that, of the authors who submitted unsolicited manuscripts direct to publishers 99.9% are rejected. If manuscripts seem suitable they may be sent to a 'reader' who has an understanding of the subject concerned or direct to the editorial section. It is at this stage after acceptance that it may be *farmed out* to EdInk who deal with a large range and many types of manuscript.

The publisher's editor will ask EdInk to quote on each manuscript stating whether they require a *light-edit* - the shortest of which is called a *screamer* or graded up to a full edit which is rarely done these days. However a *first class* edit is usually done on an academic work at University level.

- Q. Do you advise authors directly on manuscripts?
- A. Very rarely and not in the course of our daily work and they would be considered as *bed-time* reading.
- Q. Are there any literary agents in Australia?
- A. Very few. Curtis Brown (Aust) Pty. Ltd. of Sydney is well established. Advice may perhaps be obtained from the Fellowship of Australian Writers.

We usually receive educational works early in the year so that they are ready for selection in the following year's syllabus. The more difficult manuscripts come later in the year.

In a full edit attention is given to all aspects, from spelling and punctuation, to the rearrangement of material and the style of writing. A list of queries may be sent to the author or a personal discussion arranged if he/she is available. When the manuscript has been thoroughly checked (and some parts re-typed) and the design discussed with the author and printer, the first galley proofs are run. Checking continues of galleys, page proofs and more page proofs. This is followed by the design sometimes showing a complete make-up with the size of photographs, illustrations and tables. Edink may be involved with just one stage of this edit, all stages or a combination of some of them.

- Q. At what stage does the indexer appear?
- A. The index is the responsibility of the author and this is stated in most contracts with the publisher. The author is expected to do the index himself and if not, find a suitable indexer or ask the publisher to find one for him. The author is also responsible for paying the indexer.

It was the panel's opinion that the galley proofs should be sent to the indexer. This gives the opportunity to see the text in full and (in trepidation?) point out any errors which he has noted and make a list of queries to the author. If the indexer does not receive the material until it is in the page proof stage, the time left for consultation is too short. There seems to be no reason why an accepted manuscript should not be available to the indexer at the same time as the editor.

- Q. From the panel - What percentage of the members of this society are librarians and what percentage index books?
- A. Of the 60 personal members approximately 10 have been actively involved in book indexing. The percentage who index books is rather small but the importance of their work should not be lost within the indexing for libraries and the huge growth of computer indexing.
- Q. Could you outline the costs of publishing and the preparation of a publishing budget?
- A. In publishing, the largest cost is in printing and binding - say 26%. This will vary according to the estimated number of books the market can stand and varies from 2,000 to 10,000 copies. If the actual cost to make a book is about \$3.00, the recommended retail price will be about \$9.00. Discount to book sellers is usually 40% and to distributors 50 to 60%. Other costs in book production are the editorial services, general overhead and royalties of 7½% to 10%. Art work will probably be paid for six months after the book is published and royalties start at the same time.

We have said that the author is expected to find the indexer and pay him on completion of the index. This means that the author must pay \$250 to \$300 or more before he receives any royalties.

Our last question asked - what did the panel think were the most important attributes of a good indexer?

The answer came quickly: consistency, accuracy, selectivity, and plain common bloody sense. And luck too said Bob. He edits a highly technical journal for which they put out a cumulative index every twelve months. The author's index would include about a thousand names. The chairman of the journal's management committee, Sir John Price rarely appeared in print, but in 1976 a small paragraph concerning his retirement was in the journal. The index was checked twice but the editor was not happy. On the way home from work he happened to meet an ex-employee, pushing her pram and complaining about her lack of finance. On the spot, he gave her the job of re-checking the index. On her returning the papers the editor asked if any errors were found. Yes she said, one name was missing - John Price. So you see you do need luck!

In conclusion, the panel urged the Society to approach publishers, the Australian Society of Authors and the Fellowship of Australian Writers to make their work known more widely.

Meeting programme for 1978

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|------------|--|
| May 31 | <p>- <i>Time</i> : 8 pm (7.30 pm Sherry)</p> <p><i>Place</i> : Committee Room, State Library of Victoria.</p> <p><i>Subject</i> : Indexing activity in the State Library of Victoria.</p> <p><i>Speakers</i> : Members of the staff from the Research Department, La Trobe Library and Art, Music and Performing Arts Library.</p> |
| * * * * * | |
| July 19 | <p>- <i>Time</i> : 7.30 pm</p> <p><i>Place</i> : Department of Librarianship, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 200 Latrobe Street, Melbourne.</p> <p><i>Subject</i> : PRECIS - a workshop conducted by Michael Ramsden.</p> |
| * * * * * | |
| October 18 | <p>- <i>Time</i> : 8 pm (7.30 pm Sherry)</p> <p><i>Place</i> : Committee Room, 3rd Floor, CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne.</p> <p><i>Subject</i> : Annual General Meeting followed by a report on the Society of Indexers, First International Conference.</p> <p><i>Speaker</i> : Jean Hagger.</p> |

COMPLAINT AGAINST THE BBC BY MRS E. WALLIS(Reprinted by permission from *The Listener*,

vol. 98, no. 2529, October 6, 1977, p. 442-3)

The BBC Programmes Complaints Commission has issued the following report and adjudication:

Summary

Mrs E. Wallis, registrar of the Society of Indexers, complained that she and the Society had been unfairly treated by an item on indexing included in *Woman's Hour*, on Radio 4, on 25 January 1977. Mrs Wallis had contributed to the programme.

So far as the Society was concerned, it was said that, in various respects, the broadcast conveyed an inadequate and misleading account of indexing, and of the aims and effectiveness of the Society.

As to Mrs Wallis herself, complaint was made that she had been given no prior information that her interview would be broadcast in conjunction with a contribution recorded by another person on the same subject, and that it had been unfairly edited. Mrs Wallis also complained of unfair discrimination by the BBC, arising from their choice of another contributor to the programme, and also that her name was incorrectly spelt in *Radio Times*.

The only complaint which the commission uphold is the complaint that the BBC failed to inform Mrs Wallis of the use which would be made of the interview she recorded.

Details of the complaint

On 25 January 1977, the BBC included in the *Woman's Hour* programme, on Radio 4, an item dealing with the subject of indexing. After introductory remarks by the presenter of the programme, there followed an excerpt from a recorded interview with Mrs Elizabeth Wallis, described as a member of the Society of Indexers, in which the nature of indexing was discussed. This was followed by a substantially longer excerpt from a recorded interview with a Mrs Liz Till (not a member of the Society), which included the sentence ... *at least (indexing is) a job you can do largely sitting with your feet up at the end of a hard day's work*, which also described some of the difficulties of indexing and the skill required to do it properly. Mrs Till's remarks were summed up by the interviewer as follows:

Not as easy as you might have first imagined and certainly not the way to earn a bit of pin-money on the side, unless you happen to have specialised knowledge, and even then it sounds like very hard work to me.

A further excerpt of the interview with Mrs Wallis was then given, in which she spoke about the need to have some knowledge of the work to be indexed, and about the aims of the Society of Indexers.

Mrs Wallis, who is the registrar of the Society of Indexers, made a number of complaints to the commission about the broadcast. As first presented, her complaint was that she personally had been unfairly treated, but she later explained that her complaint was also made on behalf of the Society, and alleged that the Society had been unfairly treated.

Adjudication

Alleged unfair treatment of the Society of Indexers (Complaints Nos. 1, 2 and 3).

Taken by themselves, the phrases *the Society of Indexers, an organisation which tries to protect the interests of indexers and at least (indexing is) a job you can do largely sitting with your feet up at the end of a hard day's work*, might have been unfair to the Society. But the programme, taken as a whole, made it clear that the Society was concerned to promote higher standards and, in the words used by Mrs Wallis in the programme, to make indexing *a more respected craft*. The programme also brought out clearly the difficulties of indexing, the skill and experience called for, and the need for specialised knowledge. Mrs Till's remarks, taken as a whole, contributed to this picture. We do not consider that the Society was treated unfairly or unjustly in the respects alleged in these three complaints.

Alleged unfair treatment of Mrs Wallis (Complaints Nos. 4, 5 and 6).

After the interview with Mrs Wallis had been recorded, the BBC decided to introduce additional material contributed by Mrs Till. The BBC said that people being interviewed should be told if others are to take part in the programme. Mrs Wallis's evidence is that she was not told. We think that it was unfair to Mrs Wallis that the BBC did not tell her.

Mrs Wallis complains that her closing remarks were made to appear as comment on an interview with Mrs Till which she had not herself heard. We have to decide whether a reasonably attentive listener would have got the impression that the two contributors were interviewed together, and, if so, whether unfairness to Mrs Wallis was caused thereby. The first question is one on which opinions may well differ. On the one hand, Mrs Wallis has given evidence (which we accept) that some members of the Society received the impression that Mrs Wallis had heard Mrs Till's contribution before making her final comment. On the other hand, the BBC point to the phrases *went first to ask Mrs Wallis and back now, then, to Elizabeth Wallis*, which, they say, should have made it clear that the interviews were separate. Whatever is the true view on this question, we do not believe that, in the light of the overall effect of the remarks by Mrs Till, and the remark by the interviewer which immediately preceded Mrs Wallis's closing remarks, any unfairness was caused to Mrs Wallis.

As to the fact that, in the portions of the two interviews which were broadcast, the interviewer addressed Mrs Till, but not Mrs Wallis by her first name, this does not, in our judgement, amount to unfair treatment of Mrs Wallis. In so far as Mrs Wallis is criticising the choice of Mrs Till for interview, we are satisfied that the BBC, in the proper exercise of their editorial judgment, had reasonable grounds for seeking to interview Mrs Till.

The misspelling of Mrs Wallis's name in *Radio Times* was a minor mistake for which the BBC has apologised. We can see no unfairness to Mrs Wallis in this.

In the result, the only complaint which we uphold is the complaint that the BBC failed to inform Mrs Wallis of the use which would be made of her interview.

The adjudication is signed by Sir Edmund Compton and Sir Henry Fisher.

Mrs Wallis's complaints were as follows:

1. She said it was unfair for the BBC, in dealing with a subject requiring skill and knowledge, to give the greater part of the allotted time to someone who did not claim to be an experienced indexer, as compared with the time made available to a professional indexer.
2. She said that the broadcast conveyed an inadequate and misleading impression of indexing and of what the Society of Indexers stands for. The Society was introduced as *an organization which tries to protect the interests of indexers*, whereas the Society's primary interest is to safeguard and improve indexing standards, and only secondarily is it concerned to protect the interests of indexers. Mrs Till's statement, ... *at least it's a job you can do largely sitting with your feet up at the end of a hard day's work*, was quite inaccurate and had proved deeply offensive to members of the Society. It had also unfairly put the Society to expense and inconvenience in dealing, after the broadcast, with fruitless inquiries from listeners.
3. Mrs Wallis also complained that the fact that such a broadcast could take place unfairly suggested that the Society was ineffective in looking after its members.
4. Mrs Wallis said that she had been given no prior information as to the possible use which would be made of her interview, which had been recorded several months before the broadcast. In the event, it had been extensively edited, and the second excerpt from her interview had been made to appear as her comment on the statements by Mrs Till, which, in fact, she had not heard. The manner of presentation had led some members of the Society who heard the broadcast to believe that she and Mrs Till had been interviewed together, and it was, she said, unfair to imply, erroneously, that she had heard Mrs Till's remarks.
5. Mrs Wallis noted that Mrs Till was called by her Christian name in the programme, whereas she herself was not. From this appearance of discrimination, it could be concluded that some personal acquaintanceship had unfairly led to the choice of Mrs Till as a participant in the programme.
6. She also complained that her name was incorrectly spelt in *Radio Times*, and this, she said, was indicative of the BBC's carelessness.

The BBC, in their submissions to the commission, rejected the complaints of unfairness. They argued that the item, taken as a whole, had not given an unfair picture of indexing. Mrs Till, who was a lucid speaker, had been chosen for interview because she had held a responsible editorial post in a publishing firm, had commissioned indexes, and had also done indexing herself. Neither the interviewer nor the producer of the item, had any previous acquaintance with either Mrs Wallis or Mrs Till. As to the inquiries which had followed the broadcast, the BBC said that they had offered to deal with these on behalf of the Society, but the Society had declined their offer. The BBC believed that people being interviewed should be told if others were to take part in the same item. At this date, however, they could not ascertain what had been done in Mrs Wallis's case.

They had already apologised to Mrs. Wallis for the mistaken spelling of her name in *Radio Times*.

To the Society of Indexers on the occasion of its 21st birthday:

GREETINGS FROM AUSTRALIA

Clyde Garrow, President,

Australian Society of Indexers

The Australian Society of Indexers (AUSSI) sends warm fraternal greetings to The Society of Indexers on the occasion of its 21st anniversary. In this, as in so many other fields, the U.K. has shown foresight and wisdom. While the well-indexed book remains the most versatile information-retrieval resource, efficient indexing systems coupled with computing technology have helped to usher in an information based society. Looking back to the foundation of the Society of Indexers in 1957 which coincides with the early stages of this new information era, it seems that the founding fathers had clairvoyance. Their immediate goals were the creation of a professional body with its own journal and the introduction of technical standards and training programmes. All this has been achieved. And those associated with the Society are to be applauded on their fine achievements.

But more than the establishment of a national society has been achieved. In that short coming of age period two other national societies have been hived-off. First the American Society of Indexers in 1968 and more recently the Australian Society of Indexers in 1976. Few professional bodies could claim the development of comparable international influence in such a short time.

The sympathetic and kindly response of The Society at the time of the Australian Society's formation is gratefully acknowledged, in particular the generous Terms of Affiliation which provided for *The Indexer* to become the official journal of the Australian Society.

Finally, it is with great pleasure that the Australian Society congratulates The Society of Indexers on its birthday and sends our very best wishes to The Society for its continued progress.

The Indexer

As part of the affiliation agreement with the Society of Indexers members of the Australian Society of Indexers may receive *The Indexer* at £3.50 (A\$6.00) per annum (2 issues per annum - April and October). If you wish to place your subscription through our secretary please fill in and return the form below.

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