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FIRST MEETING FOR 1983

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING will be held on

THURSDAY, 17 FEBRUARY, 1983 : 5.30 for 6 p.m.
 at CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne
 Committee Room, 3rd Floor.

Following the business of the meeting, Peter Dawe, retiring President, will review the activities of the Society during his three years in office.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Sadly Coral Muntz is still not well enough to resume editorship of the Newsletter.

This is the last issue that Vera Wicks and Joyce Korn will be compiling and we gratefully hand over to the new editor -- John Thawley.

* * * * *

SOCIETY OF INDEXERS SILVER JUBILEE

In 1982 the Society of Indexers celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. *The Indexer* Vol. 13 No. 2, October 1982 published letters of congratulation from affiliated Societies, including a letter from Peter H. Dawe, President of the Australian Society of Indexers.

* * * * *

INDEXES, GOOD AND BAD - FUNNY AND SAD

Members were asked to bring to the November general meeting examples of indexes which were good, bad, amusing or otherwise noteworthy. Although there was a small attendance at this meeting, a good collection of material was presented as shown below.

Peter DAWE *Early Indexes* (reported by Jennifer Challis).

Indexes have been in existence for many years, but the making of substantial book indexes dates from the invention of moveable type in the 16th century. The index to the 1556 edition of Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* being a notable example.

In the 17th and 18th centuries indexes were intended rather as "whimsical enticements" to readers, to encourage dipping into the contents of books, rather than as a serious analysis of what was contained. An early example of the latter, and a model of its kind, was *A General Index to the Spectator, Tatler and Guardian*, published in 1757.

Cumulative indexes were made necessary by the 19th century growth in the number of serious periodicals, but the earlier ones lacked attention to subject indexing; W. F. Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature* was published in New York in 1853 but included titles only, and Mr. S. Palmer's *Quarterly Index to the Times* lacked detail. The existence of a newspaper index, appearing quarterly, is interesting, however, in view of recent comments on the need for an index to Australian newspapers.

Really satisfactory indexing appeared in America with the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* which from its beginning in 1901 had a full dictionary arrangement, with authors, titles and subjects. In England, the *Subject Index to Periodicals* began in 1915, and still exists as the *British Humanities Index, British Technology Index and British Education Index* which are now all published by the Library Association.

Peter then read some comments on indexes by early writers, such as Pliny, who used the word in the sense of a key to personality :

"The face of man is an index to his mirth, to severity and to sadness"

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The business of the meeting will include the presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statement; and the Election of the Office Bearers.

The following nominations were received by the Secretary for the Offices and Committee of the Australian Society of Indexers :-

- President : John Simkin
- Vice President : Jean Hagger
- Secretary : Jennifer Challis
- Treasurer : Joyce Korn
- Committee members : Peter Dawe
Vera Wicks

As there has been only one nomination for each of the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer and only two nominations for the Committee, the members nominated will be declared elected at the Annual General Meeting on Thursday, 17th February, 1983.

To enable the work of the Society to proceed, the new Committee met in December, 1982 and elected the following *ex officio* members :-

- Minute Secretary : Mary Kennedy
- Newsletter Editor : John Thawley
- Chairman of Panel of Assessors : George Levick

* * * * *

MEETING DATES 1983

- 17th February : Thursday
- 17th May : Tuesday
- 17th August : Wednesday
- 17th November : Thursday

* * * * *

INDEXING COURSE

As mentioned in the Newsletter for November, 1982, the RMIT Department of Librarianship has agreed to conduct another indexing course in June of 1983. Anyone interested in enrolling (and not yet contacted the Secretary) is asked to fill in the form enclosed with this Newsletter and send it to :-

The Honorary Secretary,
Australian Society of Indexers,
G.P.O. Box 1251L,
MELBOURNE. Vic. 3001.

Please note that 1983 membership will be a requirement for participation. This form is for an expression of interest only. Application forms and further details will be sent at a later date to those enquiring.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBER

The Society welcomes the following new member :-

- Ms. R. Leveson : 60 Robert Street,
Bentleigh, Vic. 3204.

* * * * *

and also Nathaniel Cotton 1800 years later using the same metaphor :

"For what is form or what is face but the soul's index".

Shakespeare made a famous comment in *Troilus and Cressida* (Act 1, Scene 3, Line 343) :

"And in such indexes, although small pricks
To their subsequent volumes, there is seen
The baby figure of the giant mass
Of things to come at large".

This quote is an appealing one for indexers, and further encouragement was given by Peter's next quotes, from Pope and from Smollett, who both use the same expression. In *The Dunciad* (Book 1, 1, 279) in 1743 :

"Index-learning turns no student pale
Yet holds the eel of science by the tail"

and in *Peregrine Pickle* (Chapter 43) in 1751 :

"A mere index hunter, who held the eel of
science by the tail".

(Perhaps Pope's phrase had become a familiar quotation when Smollett was writing?)

Horace Binney wrote to S. A. Allibone on 8th April, 1868 :

"I certainly think that the best book in the world would owe the most to a good index, and the worst book, if it had but a single good thought in it, might be kept alive by it"

but Lord John Campbell did even better for us when he said :

"So essential did I consider an index to be to every book, that I proposed to bring a bill into Parliament to deprive an author who publishes a book without an index of the privilege of copyright, and, moreover, to subject him for his offence to a pecuniary penalty"

and Peter agreed with him "110%". The Society would like to adopt this as its slogan, and to alert the Australian Copyright Council to Lord John Campbell's excellent suggestion.

Jennifer CHALLIS - *Some Indexes, with possible comments by H. B. Wheatley.*

Henry B. Wheatley, of the Library Association's Wheatley Medal fame, makes points that apply to some of the indexes that I have chosen for our amazement, horror or admiration.

Of one kind of index I have no example, but members who are practising indexers and have suffered when editors have changed their work without consultation will rejoice at the remark (p 123) :

"However learned and judicious an editor may be, we do not choose to submit to his judgment in the offhand decision of what is and what is not important".

Wheatley's own example suggests that in the eyes of the editor of the *Register of Corpus Christi Guild*, York, 1872, some are more equal than others even beyond the grave, as the introductory note states :

"This index contains the names of all persons mentioned in the appendix and foot-notes, but a selection only is given of those who were admitted into the Guild or enrolled in the Obituary".

H.B.W.'s chapter on "Different Classes of Indexes" includes those "dealing only with facts" and includes history as an example; it is easier to agree with his later statement that "some branches of political economy are subjects by no means easy to index" because books will contain opinions as well as fact.

Christiaan De Wet, author of *The Three Years War*, translated from the Dutch and published in London in 1903, describes vividly the Dutch perception of "England's great power pitted against two republics" (p 275). The *Encyclopaedia Britannica 11th Edition* describes him as a successful guerilla leader and a reviewer of his book said that he was "a brave and honourable adversary" of the British, in the Boer War of 1899-1901, which is described.

Possibly he was his own indexer, and he is fairly restrained in his selection of headings: his own actions are tucked modestly under the Cape Colony heading, and there is no heading for children, although their deaths at English hands are mentioned in the text.

The index comprises about 2% of the book, listing mainly the names of people and of battles, although there are entries for :

Block house system

Causes of the War

Hieroglyphic communication

There is inconsistency: "guns" is used as well as "ammunition" but it is a detailed and useful index.

The author later became Minister for Agriculture which suggests he was as successful at the arts of peace as of war.

"Evils of dividing an index into several alphabets" is a sub-heading of Wheatley's under his own entry for Index, and this practice is condemned by modern writers also; however, readers of *Jane Austen's Letters* edited by R. W. Chapman rejoice in the eight indexes made for this collection.

The first two of these indexes make interesting use of typography to distinguish the four generations of Jane Austen's family mentioned in the Letters, and their numerous Austen relations.

Additional information, giving the locality, makes the index to places almost a gazetteer, and the index to general topics is a dictionary of Jane Austen quotations, as it lists her opinions on such matters as Children and Clergy -- not always favourable.

Other indexes are of Jane Austen's novels, with publication details; Jane Austen's English, which makes a small dictionary of contemporary usage; of Authors, Books and Plays, and finally Ships. The latter is the least detailed and less interesting than the others, but the large number of ships mentioned shows the importance of ships and the Navy to Jane Austen and her family.

H.B.W. has a chapter "The Bad Indexer" in which he condemns publishers who waste good type and paper on useless indexes. He quotes a list of bad entries which are in fact rotated headings; he would have approved of computer aid for producing concordances but throughout his book he emphasises the need for judgment on the part of the indexer.

One sequence has dire results and leaves the indexer where perhaps he deserves to be :

"Creek in Demerara, Up a
Demerara, Up a Creek in
Up a Creek in Demerara"

The lavish index (2 pages for 670 pages of text) to *The Girls Own Annual Volume 43* (1921) is a wonderful display of the indexer's "neglect of what should be indexed, his introduction of what might well be left out, his bad analysis, and his bad headings".

"Neglect of what should be indexed" leaves most of the treasures of needlework and other handcraft buried deep within the volume; of some comfort however is the disturbing entry, "Lady's stocking with Replaceable Foot".

Jean HAGGER

Apologies for her absence were received from Jean Hagger, who however lent several publications to the Secretary whose comments follow.

Even Greater Operatic Disasters (South Melbourne, Macmillan, 1982) by Hugh Vickers, is the sequel to *Great Operatic Disasters* which Jean commented on earlier this year in the *AusSI Newsletter* (Vol. 5 No. 1, March 1981, p 3).

Both indexes follow the old tradition of giving some information to go on with, and add to the hilarity of the books. The pattern of the subheadings is usually dramatic, frequently proceeding to a crisis, as in :

Animals, as critics
as music lovers
incontinent

There is also the intriguing :

Horse, music loving
Wagner hating

Trumpeter, attacked by bees
unfortunate arrest of

Opera loving members of the Society may be inspired by :

Australia, profitable field for research
and Author ... offers munificent prize

The Sun King and his Loves (Folio Society 1982) by Lucy Norton, has some interesting entries in its index, eg :

"Marie-Therese, Queen of France"

where subheadings detail Louis XIV's mistresses, until he "becomes a model husband" -- too late for her comfort as the last subheading is "death". Although this entry is both funny and sad, the index is a useful one, and meets all the requirements of this meeting, although it is "bad" only in having too many undifferentiated page numbers after some headings, or even subheadings. An example of the latter is in Madame de Maintenon's secret marriage to Louis XIV, with 13 page numbers. However, on the whole, the organisation of subject matter within the index appears to this casual user to be well done.

George LEVICK

From *How to make an index* by Henry B. Wheatley (London, 1902) George Levick read Wheatley's remarks about the 2411 entries under the name of Smith in Ayscough's index to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. A Mr. Edward Solly had calculated that to find Zachary Smith at the rate of two minutes per reference "it might take the consulter eight days (working steadily ten hours a day) to find out if there be any note about Zachary Smith in the magazine, a task which no one would care to undertake".

Vera WICKS

The index to *Triumph in the West* by Arthur Bryant (London, Reprint Society, 1960) has two main faults, by modern standards. The first relates to headings with "strings" of references. G. Norman Knight (*Indexing, The art of*) gives 5-7 as the preferred number. This index has a number of headings with around 50 references, the longest being "Italian campaign" (subheading under "Italy") with 89 references.

The other feature of the index which does not facilitate its use is the length and arrangement of subheadings under the main persons dealt with. Viscount Alanbrooke (on whose diaries the book was based) has 6 columns of subheadings

✓ and Winston Churchill 5 columns. These entries are in more or less chronological order, resulting in some rather odd combinations :

eg. under Alanbrook -

returns to England 103
befriends a turkey 104
promoted Field-Marshal 105

and under Churchill -

falls asleep in car 341
scrambles across Rhine Bridge 343
thrilled at being under fire 344, 345

* * * * *

SECRETS WELL PROTECTED,
OR A NOTE ON
INDEXES TO PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS
(COMMONWEALTH)

I have been engaged for many years in the compilation of chronological indexes to the reports emanating from public tribunals of inquiry and similar types of investigations -- Royal Commissions, Boards of Inquiry, Parliamentary Select Committees -- established from time to time by Australian governments in order to ascertain the facts behind a social problem, the truth about an allegation detrimental to a government or one of its agencies, or the likely implication of certain proposed government policies and actions. Most reports are tabled in the appropriate parliament of the Commonwealth or of a state and if it has been ordered to be printed it should be retrievable through the indexes to parliamentary papers.

Were it but so simple! My labours might well have been redundant -- at least in some respects -- if John Citizen could go to the nearest library, ask for the indexes to Parliamentary papers and identify the report that interests him, quote the session and volume number to the reference librarian and wait for its delivery or go and find it himself. That at least is the theory -- in practice it is rather more complex.

I have recently tried to find the reports of the Royal Commission (RC) on Petroleum. From evidence seen elsewhere I know that the RC was appointed on 12th September, 1973. It so happens that this inquiry was of considerable significance at the time and a decade later it is still referred to by economists, accountants, oil prospectors and the whole petroleum industry. John Citizen, anxious to find out what the RC said about the industry in 1973 and the remedies it proposed, turns to the Index to Commonwealth Pp (Parliamentary papers) printed in the first volume of the 1974 series of Pp (because he figures out that if the RC was appointed late in 1973 its report or reports would not be ready before the 1974 sessions). It is not an overwhelmingly long index: 9½ pages covering the contents of 335 Pp bound into 17 volumes. There are about 300 main entries and 100 sub-entries. John Citizen, reasonably educated, has no intention to waste his time reading through the index to find the RC's reports but looks immediately to the form heading, Royal Commissions; but there is no such entry between "Roads..." and "Rural..." Nor does he fare better with a search under the heading "Commission".

Oh well, John Citizen resigns himself to the fact that form headings may be at a premium and tries for the subject approach. With a title so simple and so obvious, surely there must be something under Petroleum! Great is his surprise when the 1974 list mentions only "Petroleum Search Subsidy-Report for 1973-74 (No.323)" and the 1975 list (checked just in case the report was much delayed) contains no reference at all to petroleum.

Somewhat in despair, muttering words about the Pp indexes which cannot be printed here, he settles down to the fascinating and titillating task of reading the whole index -- passing quickly through the section beginning with the word "Australia" and other long blocks of entries, such as "Tariff Board - Reports" which are really too unlikely to contain reference to this RC's reports, hoping that the magic words "Royal Commission on Petroleum-Report(s)" will appear somewhere.

Finally he comes to "S" in the 1974 volume where his eyes light on :

Shortages of Petroleum Products-1st Report of Royal
Commission on Petroleum, October 1974 (No.229)

Eureka -- there it is! Some success, at last. There is no telling what the Report is about until one has seen it. And if this is the first report, where is the second? And what will it be about? The most careful scrutiny of the 1974 index reveals no other mention, but on reading through the 1975 index he discovers, under "P", the illuminating entry :

Proposals for New Refineries in New South Wales-Report of
Royal Commission on Petroleum (2nd Report) (No.21) . . .

How, without a particular gift for prophecy and hindsight could anyone have known that the RC's second report was so entitled? Were there more reports? On rereading the 1975 index, John Citizen discovers that there was a third report called :

Circumstances of the transfer of allocated indigenous
crude oil by Allied Petrochemicals Pty. Limited to ACTU-Solo
Enterprises Pty. Ltd. (3rd Report) (No.279)

This entry is not even graced by a reference to the Royal Commission on Petroleum and the user of the index has to go to the appropriate volume to find out that fact for himself.

While some of our parliamentary representatives are battling to introduce Freedom of Information legislation, those who are not in favour of such innovations may rest in peace: the parliamentary clerical staff in charge of Pp has the means of preserving the status quo. The example here cited is a specially telling one, but it is by no means rare. John Citizen will continue to have problems in finding even what the Government of the day has issued in printed form.

The problem is an important one. It goes right to the roots of the Freedom of Information legislation and seems to me much more important than to make available all the letters and memoranda that have passed between one head of department and another. The Freedom of Information Act will merely result in less letters and memoranda being passed between heads of departments, sub-heads, and no heads at all. In effect, the legislation may well have been designed by those who want to counter the cry for more typists in the Public Service. What has not been written down cannot be shown to anyone. If I were a senior public servant, I'd commit less and less to paper. "Let's talk it over at the club" will be the future standard manner of treating inter-departmental issues -- as indeed it is to a large extent already.

But what has been published should be readily accessible. The only sensible way of easing access to an annual publication programme involving four hundred or more separate titles, is to produce a good index. The index to Pp now compiled by persons who have no idea whatever of thesaurus terms, of specific entry, of cross references, is not only a sad monument to stupidity but it could be rightly considered as the very opposite to the aims and objectives of the FOI Act. The index to Pp appears designed to deliberately conceal what is in the Pp.

I have restricted myself in this short note to the Pp of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Parliament should set a high example of quality to publishing

and in providing access to its documents. More, much more, could be said of the indexes to state Pp. The Commonwealth Parliament has a Joint Publications Committee -- it is time that the Committee took steps to improve this disgraceful index.

D. H. BORCHARDT.

* * * * *

LETTER TO THE AUSTRALIAN AUTHOR

The following letter, written by Peter Dawe, President of AusSI, is reprinted here for the information of members :

The Editor,
"The Australian Author",
23 Atchison Street,
ST. LEONARDS, N.S.W., 2065

Dear Sir,

Your November 1982 issue contains a series of articles on textbook writing; all interesting in their different ways, but all showing the same serious lack. Unless I am much mistaken, not one of these articles refers to the importance of a textbook's index!

When the value and utility of a book which is specifically written for instruction depends so heavily on its index, lack of any reference to the importance of the index can be regarded only with dismay.

Unfortunately, these articles are by no means atypical in this respect. It is part of the objectives of this young Australian Society, however, to raise the awareness of all concerned with accessing information, to the value and importance of indexes and to the considerable skills required in their compilation.

In drawing this matter to your attention, we hope that your readers and writers will recognise the importance of indexes and the training and skills involved in their preparation.

Any of your readers interested in the objects of the Australian Society of Indexers are invited to contact

The Secretary,
G.P.O. Box 1251L,
Melbourne, 3001

Yours faithfully,

P. H. Dawe
PRESIDENT

22 December, 1982

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AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE ON INDEXING
AND ABSTRACTING

Unfortunately there has been no response to D. H. Borchardt's request for members of the Society to notify me of Australian contributions in the field of indexing and abstracting.

The request was made in an endeavour to assist Professor Hans Wellisch in the compilation of the supplement to his *Indexing and abstracting : an international bibliography*. The period to be covered by the supplement is 1976 to 1981 and the list of references which appeared in the September issue of our Newsletter has been forwarded to Professor Wellisch. I have been informed by Professor Wellisch that he has started to collect material which was published in 1982.

A brief review by D. H. Borchardt of this first attempt at a comprehensive overview of more than a century of writing on indexing and abstracting appeared in the September issue of *Australian academic and research libraries*. The bibliography was published in cooperation with the American Society of Indexers and the Society of Indexers and it is therefore quite appropriate that the Australian Society of Indexers assist in this particular project. Included in the work are items of a general nature; material dealing with indexing languages, indexing terms, their linguistic aspects and indexing systems. Tests and evaluations of the effectiveness of the multiplicity of indexing languages and systems, the techniques of indexing, the indexing of books, serials and non-book materials, the indexing of names and specific subjects and the use of indexes and user studies are also included. Other sections of the work cover indexers, their consistency, training, etc. Abstracting is covered first from a general point of view followed by sections on the techniques of abstracting. Comparisons of the scope and coverage of A & I services and the history, production and evaluation of some individual services are also dealt with.

It is hoped that this brief description of the scope of Professor Wellisch's work will encourage members of the Society to forward details of any relevant items which may be of interest to the project. The task is by no means a huge one and is a practical and useful one which the Society should be able to undertake to illustrate its commitment to indexing in Australia and to assist in drawing attention to Australian literature on this topic.

Please forward any entries, which should contain full bibliographical details and a brief summary of the contents, to John Thawley, C/o CILES, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 3002.

John THAWLEY.

* * * * *

BOOK REVIEWS - INDEXES MENTIONED

The Age, 8 January 1983

IGOR AND VERA STRAVINSKY: a photograph album (Thames and Hudson) reviewed by Michael Shmith. "Only two quibbles: no index and no chronological table (though the photographs are of course presented in chronological order)".

(Publishing by Peter Ryan). "The recently issued 'High Command' by Major David Horner is an important book and ought to have been authoritative. But the standard at which it has been published mocks the important contents. The editorial work is inadequate, the index has mistakes, and the proofreading is poor".

Australian Book Review (40) May 1982

BROADCASTING LAW & POLICY IN AUSTRALIA, by Mark Armstrong (Butterworths) reviewed by K.D.G. "The material is well organized and readers can readily find particular topics through a comprehensive list of contents and an index".

EXILES AT HOME: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945, by Drusilla Modjeska (A & R) reviewed by Judy Turner. "... the excellent index, which abounds with references to progressive writers, is devoid of a reference to Mary Grant Bruce, that most popular and prolific woman writer".

A TASTE IN TIME: 60 Minute Menus, by Beverley Sutherland Smith (Lansdowne Press) reviewed by Mary Lord. "The instructions for each menu are clear and simple, there is a good index ..."

(41) June 1982

AUSTRALIA IN THE KOREAN WAR 1950-53. Volume I: Strategy and Diplomacy, by Robert O'Neill (The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service) reviewed by P. G. Edwards. "The book is based on a comprehensive and detailed study of Australian Government documents ... There is much else of importance in the 411 pages of text and 134 pages of appendixes, bibliography and an index".

COPYRIGHT KIT (Library Association of Australia) reviewed by Dianne Reilly. "Regrettably, it has no index".

EARLY AUSTRALIAN POETRY: an annotated bibliography of original poems published in Australian newspapers, magazines and almanacs before 1850, by Elizabeth Webby (Hale and Iremonger) reviewed by Paul Macpherson (Bibliography) "An index lists newspapers, magazines, almanacs and identifiable poets... Although the provision of an index to titles, and perhaps to subjects, would have greatly expanded the size of the work, it would have made it even more useful to the reference librarians and students of colonial literature who will be its main users".

FRENCH PROVINCIAL BOOKING, ITALIAN REGIONAL COOKING, by Tony Schmaeling (Lansdowne Press) reviewed by Vida Horn. "The arrangement is by region ... The bilingual indexes are not as comprehensive as this method of arrangement requires".

THE RUSSIANS AT PORT JACKSON 1814-1822, by Glynn Barratt. (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies) reviewed by Beth Gott. "... soft cover, well indexed, and with a good bibliography ..."

TROPICAL AND SUBTROPICAL GARDENING, by Harry Oakman (Jacaranda Press) reviewed by Vida Horn. "The index lists common botanical plant names only, and there is no subject index".

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN LITERATURE: a bibliography, by Bruce Bennett, John Hay and Susan Ashford (Longman Cheshire) reviewed by Paul Macpherson (Bibliography) "Appendixes list anthologies of Western Australian literature and a select list of literary periodicals, and there are also indexes to titles and to authors and editors".

(45) October 1982

A SOLDIER'S VIEW OF EMPIRE: the reminiscences of James Bodell, 1831-92, edited by Keith Sinclair (The Bodley Head) reviewed by Noel McLachlan. "... generally his annotation is meticulous. (He can hardly be blamed for the absence of an index)".

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL: an annotated bibliography of recent Australian studies, by D.S. Anderson and C. Blakers (ANU Press). "An index arranged by subject adds to its value for researchers and funding bodies".

(47) Dec. 1982/Jan. 1983

IN SEARCH OF EDWARD JOHN EYRE, by Geoffrey Dutton (Macmillan) reviewed by Ray Erickson. "Only title, index, extra illustrations and the publisher are quite new, and there is not one word to inform intending buyers and readers that this book is not new writing published for the first time in 1982".

VICTORIA

- Mr. J. D. Adams, Unit 17, 115 Torbay Street, Macleod, 3085.
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Miss M. Rogers, Flat 7, 11 Kooyong Road, North Caulfield, 3161.
RMIT, Central Library (Serials), Level 5, Casey Wing,
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- Mrs. L. Stead, Central Gippsland Library Service,
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- Miss A. B. Taylor, Unit 2, 6 Edlington Street, Hawthorn, 3122.
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- Mr. J. D. Thawley, 150 St. Helena Road, Greensborough, 3088.
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NEW ZEALAND

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