Editorial

This issue features a report from the judges' panel on the entries for the Australian Society of Indexers Medal. There are also reports from the NSW and ACT Branches and the third and final part of John Scarce's talk on indexes for genealogists. This will be the last issue of the AusSI Newsletter for 1994. May I take this opportunity to thank members of the Society for their contributions to this Newsletter. I look forward to more letters and suggestions in the new year.

Rebecca Smale

Past AusSI Medal Winners	
1985	Jeremy Fisher
1986	*Not awarded*
1987	*Not awarded*
1988	Elmar Zalums
1989	Alan Walker
1990	*Not awarded*
1991	Geraldine Suter
1992	Max McMaster & Margery Price
1993	Max McMaster
1994	Barry Howarth

And the medal winner is ...

The Australian Society of Indexers Medal for 1994 was awarded at a dinner held on Wednesday 16 November at Graduate House, University of Melbourne. The winner was presented with the medal and a certificate. The publisher of the winning index was also presented with a certificate. Following is the judges' report, written by Ross Harvey.

The judges for the 1994 award were Max McMaster, John Curtain and Ross Harvey. A total of twenty-five indexes was submitted for consideration (a higher number than in previous years) and a shortlist was selected.

The judges assessed the short-listed indexes using six criteria:

1. Was the index comprehensive?

2. Did it differentiate sufficiently (depth of indexing)?
3. Were cross-references appropriate and effective?
4. Was the index well presented on the page?
5. Did the index work (obviously more subjective)?
6. Finally—and more subjective still—did the index enhance the book further than any competent index would do?

All short-listed indexes were competent and all were deserving of praise in various ways. One of the judges commented that we were judging at the level of "an Olympic final, not a fun run". The judging produced one clear winner and no specific runner-up, or to put it another way, one clear winner and five commended indexes that were all of high standard.

The runners-up

Patricia Holt's index to A History of Hawthorn *by V. Peel, D. Zion and J. Yule (Melbourne University Press, 1993).*
We considered that this otherwise admirable index was flawed by insufficient references and by the lack of entries for some names, for example, in the photographs.

Kingsley Siebel's The Laws of Australia, *vol. 5,* Civil Procedure *(Law Book Company, 1994).*
While we recognised this index's specialised audience, we considered that it did not use a sufficiently wide range of key words, thus restricting the access it provided to the book. There were typographical inconsistencies, such as 'see' references being right-justified whereas 'see also' references were not, and we noted that some terms that we expected to be present were not.

Geraldine Suter's index to Australian Criminal Justice *by M. Findlay, S. Odgers and S. Yeo (Oxford University Press, 1994).*
We felt that the indexer was perhaps working under constraints imposed by the publisher which resulted in blemishes, for instance, poor turnovers did not help presentation. We also noted some inconsistencies between thorough indexing in some cases and no index entries for other terms we expected.

Alan Walker's index to Blackstone's Guide to Australian Legal Books 1986–1990 *(Blackstone Press, 1993).*
While we were sympathetic with the difficulties which the indexer encountered in compiling this index, (the book is a collection of title pages and contents pages), we felt that this index could have been more comprehensive and that it did not allow for the possibility of use by the general user, catering rather for the legal user in its choice of terms.

Indexes to the ASC Digest *by Alan Walker Christine Skourletos et. al. (Australian Securities Commission, 1994).*
This entry was in fact three indexes to a periodical, two of which were relatively straightforward and presented no special challenges. Although all three indexes achieved their stated aims well and were impressively extensive and industrious, they did not demonstrate the qualities which raised them from the level of competent to that of inspired. This entry posed some problems for the judges. We encountered some difficulty when considering how to assess indexes of a 'mechanical' kind against those book indexes which provide greater scope for critical discrimination. Although we had no difficulty in resolving the issue in this case, we felt that it was likely to become a more frequent occurrence which the Society may need to consider in the future in relation to its Medal award.

Although the above comments are necessarily cast in a negative tone, it is worth reiterating that all of the short-listed entries are technically competent and of high quality.

The winner

Barry L. Howarth's index to Portrait of the Family within the Total Economy *by G. D. Snooks (Cambridge University Press, 1994).*
Barry is a new member of the Australian Society of Indexers and lives in the ACT. The judges felt that this technically competent index also added an additional perspective to the book by enhancing the reader's knowledge of the book's structure and content. One judge commented that it was a "humane" index. Features we particularly liked included its clear typography, its 'see' and 'see also' references, comprehensive nature, the inclusion of glossary terms in the index, and its use of entries such as "Sontag S.: on photography" and "Schumpeter, Joseph: on economic growth" which alert the user to the precise context of the term.

There were, however, other characteristics that we liked less: subheadings were not always in consistent alphabetical order, punctuation was not always consistent, and the use of 'passim' (although we realised that this may have been prescribed by the publisher's house style). However, these characteristics, which we note here in the spirit of constructive criticism, did not detract significantly from what is a helpful and intelligent index.

I noted in an earlier Medal award report that indexers must be a modest lot, because they

did not insist on their names being added to the books they indexed. I'm pleased to note that this was not the case in 1994: all indexers were named!

The judges offer their congratulations to Barry Howarth and also to the runners-up.

Ross Harvey
(on behalf of the judging panel)

ACT Branch Forthcoming Events

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Thursday 21 February 1995 at 7 pm at the Turkish Pide House, 2 Lawry Place, Macquarie. (This is across the road from the Jamison Centre, on the town side.)

Further details are available from Geraldine Triffitt, tel (06) 246 1177.

ACT Branch Report

Geraldine Triffitt reports on the November ACT Branch regional meeting, at which Pat Woolley from Fast Books talked about self-publishing.

On Tuesday 15 November, we took over the restaurant at the School of Hospitality and Tourism, Canberra Institute of Technology for a Gueridon dinner, where students cooked Steak Dianne and Crepes Suzette at our tables.

Ms Pat Woolley from Fast Books was our speaker, who presented a different view of publishing—self-publishing. She stressed that this was not vanity publishing. Her company prints self-published works in small print runs on a range of subjects, accepting manuscripts, disks or camera-ready copy. With sophisticated equipment she can scan information from A4 pages, print and collate in one step at reasonable prices. Professional assistance is given on layout, page and cover design. The house newsletter, *Wilder Images*, gives practical information and lists prices for ready-to-print and word-processed disks. Each client has an interview costing $75.00 during which preliminary pages and issues such as copyright are worked out, but editing is minimal.

One feature of self-publishing is that authors can conduct their own market research and print only the number of copies likely to sell, thereby saving money on excess copies and distribution and advertising costs.

Printing on demand will have ramifications for commercial publishers, and Ms Woolley foresaw changes in the publishing industry as a result.

Geraldine Triffitt

NSW Branch Activities

The following excerpt, taken from Index-L on the Internet, summarises the results of a survey that was reported on at the NSW Branch Meeting in October 1994.

Connie Wilson, from the University of New South Wales, has carried out research into how successfully indexing and abstracting services apply subject headings. She examined six services over about 60 years by searching for "Bradford's Law of Scatter" in each one. Each service claims it uses a thesaurus of controlled terms, but for the one topic she found 29 different forms of the term.

She then compared the entries appearing in LISA and ISA with a database based on her own collection of papers on the topic. She found that the use of the word "Bradford" in an indexer-assigned descriptor for an article in which the word appears several times was surprisingly small, even when the word appears in the title.

With the increasing availability of software to carry out many different types of searches, should we let the documents "index themselves"?

Members' contributions

Even the index of a book can occasionally furnish a story in itself ...[T]he following gem [is] from the index to Boswell's London Journal (ed. F. A. Pottle, London, 1950):

Lewis, Mrs (Louisa), actress. JB to call Louisa in journal, 84; receives JB, 85; JB visits, 88; JB's increased feeling for, 89; JB discusses love with, 94–5; JB anticipates delight with, 96; JB lends two guineas to, 97; disregards opinion of world, 97–8; discusses religion with JB, 101; JB entreats to be kind, 101; uneasiness of discourages JB, 104; JB declares passion for, 107; promises to make JB blessed, 107; JB sees every day, 109; JB talks with freely of love connections, 112; JB promises to support child, should one be born, 113; makes assignation with JB, 116; consummation with JB interrupted, 117; promises to pass night with JB, 118; JB likes better and better, 121; JB's felicity delayed, 126; to stay with JB Wednesday night, 130; agrees to go to Hayward's with JB, 135; account of her birth, unhappy marriage, and separation, 135; spends night with JB at Hayward's, 137–40; JB has tea with, 141–2; JB afraid of a rival, 144; JB feels coolness for, 145; reads French with JB, 145; JB resolves to keep affection for alive, 149; JB incredulous at infection from, 155–6; JB enraged at perfidy of, 158; JB discusses infection with and takes leave of, 158–61; JB asks his two guineas back, 174–5; returns JB's guineas, 187; mentioned, 12, 98, 116.

Indexes for Genealogists—Part 3

by John Scarce

The following edited excerpt is the third and final part of John Scarce's paper which was presented to the Melbourne General Meeting on 10 August 1994. After discussing the history of the original Indexes and the development of the Victorian Pioneers Index, John now provides advice on how to obtain information from the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

In summary, the problem of people not being able to find their ancestors in any of the Indexes released by the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages involves issues such as:
• whether or not the event was ever registered;
• if it was registered, whether it was done correctly;
• if it was indexed, whether it was done correctly;
• variations in name spelling;
• search techniques;

• and, of course, whether or not the event occurred in Victoria.

With the Early Church Records of Baptism, Burial and Marriage, there are still many church records that were never sent to the Registry in spite of legislative requirements that they be forwarded. In addition, religious ceremonies were voluntary and not all children were necessarily baptised.

With the early events it is wise to consult the New South Wales Indexes as not all records relating to Victoria have been transferred from Sydney.

As a result of the work done on the Victorian Pioneers Index we are confident that all records held by the Registry for the period 1837–1888 are now included in the Index.

I will now say a few words about making applications to the Registry for copies of certificates.

When applying for certificates it is preferable to use the official application forms which are available from all Victorian Post Offices. These forms specify the information that we require and make for speedier processing.

If you do write a letter to the Registry, please be precise and concise and supply enough personal detail about the individual to enable a positive identification to be made, and clearly indicate whether it is a birth, death or a marriage entry that you are seeking. Please ensure that you send us only Victorian registration numbers and not those relating to records of other States.

The registrations which you obtain from the microfiche indexes enable you to purchase certified copies of birth, death and marriage records for half the normal fee because you have done the searching yourselves.

When quoting official entry numbers from any of our Indexes, please be sure to quote the number in full, especially if there is an alphabetical suffix. Remember also to quote the year in which the event was registered, as the registration number alone is not sufficient to identify the particular entry that you request. People who write in and do not fully quote a registration number run the risk of being charged the full fee of $32.00 for their certificate in payment for a search which will have to be conducted by the Registry.

For events which occurred over seventy-five years ago there is no restriction on access. However, for more recent events, restrictions do apply. Birth certificates are only available to the person who was registered, their immediate family, or to someone who holds written authority.

For births, the seventy-five year ruling takes us back to 1919, however, the index volumes at the Registry are consolidated for the period from 1914 to 1930. This means that it is not possible to release any additional index without having volunteers go through the books extracting the birth entries for each year, which would be a mammoth, time-consuming task.

If the indexes were computerised, it would be possible to download the index data as each year fell within the guidelines. But as things stand, it will be 2005 before any new birth index data is released. For marriage entries there is a seventy-five year closure rule from the date of birth of the younger party to the marriage.

As a general rule, there is no restriction on applications for death certificates.

Apart from the new Indexes that I have described, one of the most important recent changes is the degree of co-operation between the State Registries of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

One tangible example of this co-operation is the new system of Interfax. It is now possible to apply for a certificate from another State by making application at the Registry in Melbourne and for a small additional handling fee, your application will be faxed immediately to the Registry in the State concerned. Once the application has been faxed, the Victorian Registry has no control over the issuing of the document from the other Registry.

Another example of this co-operation is the introduction in January of this year of the new certificate paper. By the end of the year, all States will be using it. The paper is watermarked, has a map of Australia on it and the word 'void' appears on any photocopied certificate to help reduce fraud.

This liaison did not exist in years gone by and it can only augur well for the future as we work towards an Australia-wide Pioneers Index and a standardisation of record keeping.

If you ever have any questions regarding the indexes or the certificates from the Victorian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages, please don't hesitate to give me a call.

John Scarce

New Members
The Society welcomes the following new member:

Ms E. Francis, Chelmer, Queensland

The Wonderful World of Indexing

Conferences
If you would like to notify AusSI members of any events, send information (including dates, venue, cost, theme and contact) to the Editor.

31 January–2 February 1995
Online 95: Seventh Information Online and On Disc Conference
VENUE: Sydney Convention Centre, NSW
CONTACT: Australian Convention Management, Tel. (02) 332 4622, Fax (02) 332 4066

31 March–2 April 1995
Indexers—Partners in Publishing: First International Conference
VENUE: Marysville, Vic
CONTACT: Margaret Findlay, Conference Organiser, 3a Goodall St, Hawthorn Vic 3122, Tel./Fax (03) 818 1760

9 June–10 June 1995
ASI/IASC Annual Convention and Workshops
First joint meeting of the American Society of Indexers and the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada. A mix of technical and practical papers, workshops and social events is planned to stimulate conversation and provide an exciting learning opportunity for all.
VENUE: Delta Montreal Hotel, Montreal, Canada.
CONTACT: ASI, PO Box 386, Port Aransas, TX 78373, Tel. (512) 749 4052, Fax (512) 749 6334, e-mail, asi@well.sf.ca.us

19 October–20 October 1995
Eleventh National Cataloguing Conference
VENUE: Park Grand Hotel, Elizabeth St, Sydney
THEME: Reinventing Cataloguing
CONTACT: ACMS, PO Box 468, Paddington NSW 2001, Tel. (02) 332 4622, Fax (02) 332 4066, email: whfoda_acms@interconnect.com.au

Interested members are invited to submit proposals for papers relating to indexing, especially in connection with electronic networks. Abstracts are due 10 February 1995. They should be sent to the contact address above.

A Quotation from the Past

"For various reasons, the elderly fathers of the Melbourne Public Library do not employ women except to scrub floors. There are a good many jobs at the Library. It is a nice, cool, quiet spot in the summertime, and a sheltered and pleasant place without draughts in the winter. Much of the work consists in sitting down and waiting for somebody to turn up and ask for something; and a woman could almost do that. The time seems right to give her the chance. In neither war nor peace can we any longer afford to waste men in unproductive jobs. If the new arrivals at the library are nice things in clean pinnies and with a cheerful appearance, so much the better—always providing that the supply of disabled soldier has failed to satisfy the demand."

Bulletin 1 March 1917

Next Deadline—Friday 27 Jan.1995
News, views and reviews are always welcome. Floppy disks will be appreciated where articles are longer than one A4 page (preferably 3.5" Macintosh disks; Microsoft Word software; IBM is also OK).

Merry Christmas and a

Happy New Year!!