



Australian Society of Indexers NEWSLETTER

Volume 18, Number 3, April 1994

ISSN 0314-376

This month's issue contains a report from Geraldine Triffitt about the ACT branch AGM held on 15 February. Max McMaster addressed Information Studies students at RMIT on the indexing profession. The highlights of this talk are outlined. Paul Michell, Local Studies Librarian at Northcote City Library, discusses the development of an index of local parks and streets. And lastly a letter from Michael Wyatt discussing some of the difficulties indexers face in dealing with publishers.

ACT News: Writing Abstracts Workshop

A workshop on Writing Abstracts will be held at:

Venue: Burgmann College ANU
Grenville Price Room
Time: 9.15am - 4.00pm
Date: 30 April 1994
Cost: \$60.00 for members of
AusSI & Society of Editors
\$75.00 for non members

Cost includes lunch, refreshments and pre workshop papers

Contact: Olga Howell
Ph: (06) 251 3237
Fx: (06) 251 6463

More news from the ACT...

A panel discussion 'Quality from Quantity: how to find what you want from a database' is planned for the ACT branch June meeting. The venue and date has yet to be decided.

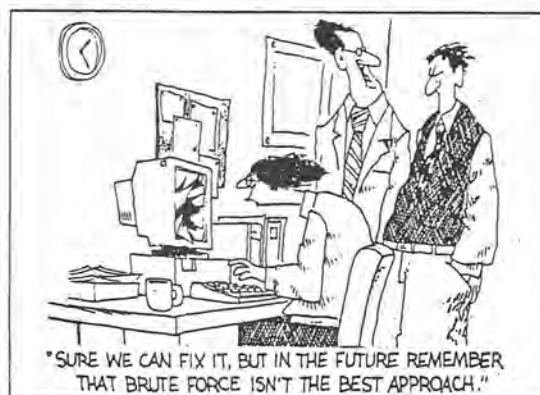
This session will discuss how you index in order to retrieve the 'ten best books or articles' on a particular subject when a computer search of the database gives you hundreds of hits.

ACT News: AGM and Dinner

This meeting was held in the delightful facilities of the Australian Heritage Commission for which we thank Elizabeth Thompson, the Librarian, for making the arrangements. After a brief business meeting new members Olga Howell and Robert Hyslop were elected to replace retiring members, Hilary Kent and Margaret Hyland. We ate our buffet meal on the terrace with views to Parliament House and east to Queanbeyan. Food, drink and conversation flowed freely as members swapped indexing experiences.

The ACT Committee members for 1994 were elected as follows: Geraldine Triffitt, Susan Mac Dougall, Jenni Cole, Laurelle Tunks, Barbara Dickens, Olga Howell, Robert Hyslop.

Geraldine Triffitt



ACT BRANCH PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The following report was presented by ACT president Geraldine Triffitt, at the ACT Annual General Meeting held in Canberra on February 15th, 1994.

Welcome to everyone. We are particularly happy to welcome a new member of the branch, Katherine Renee Tunks born on 8 February to Laurelle. About this time last year we were also giving birth - to this new branch.

We have had quite an eventful year in setting up a new branch, establishing a bank account, post office box, successfully drafting our Constitution. We have had regular meetings of the committee at our meeting place, the Anzac Park Eatery on the second Wednesday lunchtime of the month. The committee have all worked very hard, been enthusiastic to take on the organising of activities and I would like to thank them very much for their support during the year.

Our functions for the year after the inaugural meeting were:
Meet the Back-of-book indexers in May. Patricia Clarke, Robert Hyslop and Olga Howell gave three perspectives on indexing, authors' index, practical hints on indexing and the pitfalls of contracting to government departments.

In June we met the Database indexers. Judy Iltis of the Australian Institute of Criminology talked about CINCH, Karyn Gladwish from Attorney-General's described AGIS and I spoke about some of the databases at AIATSIS.

Those who attended the September dinner were entertained by Peter Judge who somehow managed to combine mediaeval Venice and CSIRO indexing.

Our last function in October was unfortunately not well attended. We were introduced to the sports databases at the National Sports Information Centre by Greg Blood and Janet Wardman, while Bob Pym stunned us with the scope of problems of indexing the films, videos, bird calls, etc at the National Film and Sound Archive.

One thing we should consider is publicising our activities. We have not yet managed that satisfactorily, particularly meeting the deadlines of the library newsletters. We advertise our functions in the Society's newsletter and through the Society of Editors. Our attempt at the Fridge Door did not yield any new interest. Basically we are only reaching the converted and there is a lot of interest, particularly among librarians, who are not being informed. We have some other ideas for this year, such as the *Thorpe Weekly newsletter*. We also need to be listed in Canberra community directories as we are a bit difficult to find, if someone has an index they want prepared.

Besides functions we have been involved in other activities. As the majority of our members are document indexers, a subcommittee of Lynn Farkas, Barbara Dickens and Laurelle Tunks has been working on standards and criteria for registration for document indexers. It is hoped this will be applied nationally.

Robert Hyslop was a finalist for the Society's medal and attended the Society's dinner in Melbourne in November. Some members have expressed concern at the lack of feedback to indexers entered for the medal. We have written to the Secretary suggesting that written reports be available to participants.

Robert Hyslop also commented on the draft standard ISO/DIS999 for indexing on behalf of the committee. He recommended endorsement of the standard. I have a copy of the draft standard if anyone would like to look at it.

The International Conference: **Indexers - Partners in Publishing** to be held in Marysville, Victoria from 31 March to 2 April 1995 is at an advanced planning stage. A call for papers and expressions of interest will be circulated in the next few weeks. Among the activities planned are visits for the international visitors to come to other parts of Australia including Canberra. We would appreciate ideas of workshops, meetings or activities for these post-conference visitors.

One area of concern to indexers generally is the publishing of substantial books without indexes. We must promote our skills. I feel this personally as I work for an organisation which has a publishing arm. The reviewer of one of their recent books on Con Colleano which appeared in last Saturday's Canberra Times was critical of the lack of an index. I feel I must lobby my colleagues much more. Another concern is that of Commonwealth government departments with headquarters in Canberra, hiring interstate indexers to provide indexes to government reports.

Now what is in the pipeline for 1994? Firstly, a full day workshop on preparing abstracts to be held at Burgmann College on Saturday 30 April.

Max McMaster has left CSIRO to set himself up as a self-employed indexer.

He will be visiting Canberra during the September school holidays and he and I (the committee are not yet aware of this) thought it would be good to meet and find out how his new career is going. (It will be after his first tax period!)

Does anyone have any other ideas? Would you like a winter dinner meeting? Do you know of any indexing software which could be demonstrated? What courses should be run?

In summary, despite some teething problems, we have had a varied year and I feel that in 1994 the branch can do some useful work to promote our skills and support independent indexers.

Geraldine Triffitt



ACT BRANCH FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1993

Income

	\$
Establishment grant	500.00
Functions	375.00
Membership	155.00
Bank interest	3.60

Total **1033.60**

Expenditure

Functions	493.13
Stationery	90.40
Postage	23.40
Bank charges	1.04

Total **607.97**

Surplus **\$425.63**

BANK RECONCILIATION

Bank account balance	
Dec 31 1994	\$425.63
Cheques not presented	0.00
Income in hand	0.00
Cash book balance	\$425.63



'Indexing'

A presentation to students of Information Management & Library Studies, RMIT



By **Max McMaster**

21 February 1994



In his presentation, Max drew on his valuable experience as an indexer, to discuss Indexing as a career. Max highlights such things as time management, computer literacy and Inter personal skills as just some of the important factors essential in persueing a career in indexing. Following are the highlights of his presentation.

How does one get into indexing?

There are no accredited courses on indexing in Australia, but a number of courses include indexing as a unit. These are in library science/information science, editing/publishing or records management courses. The Australian Society of Indexers also run short courses on indexing. However most indexers learn the trade on the job.

What makes a good indexer?

Have a very good understanding of the subject matter being indexed. If you don't understand the subject, don't do the job, e.g. I won't handle detailed legal or religious works, because I don't have the relevant background.

Put yourself in the position of the user of the book, and so provide access points from what the user has in their mind, to what the author of the book may have provided. This is the major difficulty with author-indexed works, they know their book intimately, but unfortunately for poor muggins who has either purchased the book or is consulting it in a library, they very often do not have the same level of understanding of the subject as the author. If they did, they wouldn't need to look at the thing! I am sure you have experienced this type of thing when looking at a computer manual you know the system can perform some function, unfortunately you just can't find it in the

index, because you don't know what it is called.

Be a good organizer of time, and be prepared to set and stick to deadlines. As the indexer is usually the last person to see the book, and invariably the designer, illustrator, graphic artist, editor, etc. have been late all along the line, the indexer has to keep to deadlines so that the publisher can get the copy to the printer or get shunted out of the print queue, which may delay publication by several weeks. As usual the indexer is the one who gets squeezed in trying to meet schedules.

Have good interpersonal skills - you must be able to get on with editors-- very important as they are the ones who authorize payment of your account.

Have good computer skills - most indexers use dedicated indexing packages, and then transfer the output into a word processing package used by the publishing house.

The future for indexers

There is work available - the more enlightened publishers employ professional indexers, whilst others rely on, and expect the author to produce the index. This is where the indexing profession must sell itself better to the publishing fraternity.

You might say that with the advances in information technology, and the development of electronic journals, the next step will be to electronic books. This is where the indexer is going to be invaluable. Any of you who have searched full text databases, e.g. a newspaper, will understand the difficulties of using Boolean operators in searching full text files. The first term required may be in paragraph 1, whilst the second term could be in paragraph 20,

resulting in a likely irrelevant document. Imagine applying the same principle to a 400 page book. The only practical means of searching the electronic book, is to perform the Boolean operation on the index, and then with say hypertext links get to the appropriate paragraph or section of the book. Indexers will be around for may years to come !

LETTERS....



Many of the members of AusSI are freelance indexers working largely for commercial or other publishers. Freelance editorial staff are normally in a position of little power when it comes to dealing with corporations, since (a) there is no award or agreement covering freelance editorial staff, and (b) publishers are unwilling to sign contracts with freelance editorial staff. It is common practice for publishers to contract work verbally by telephone, and to give instructions in the same way.

Many of us (possibly most of us) have had a dispute with a publisher, usually over payment, and found ourselves in a powerless position, with no room for negotiation. This can arise from dishonest dealings on the part of the

publisher, but more frequently from lack of experience or incompetence on the part of the commissioning editor or the senior editor in charge. In cases of disputes, managers most often either back up their own staff or refuse to negotiate at all.

The interests of freelance staff working for book publishers are poorly represented by the Media Alliance, which allocates few staff and resources to them. The various state Societies of Editors comprise not only freelance workers but also the senior editors who are often to blame. And of course the ABPA looks after the interests of its own members, i.e. publishing organisations.

This problem is going to stay with us for as long as we do nothing about it. What is the solution? Perhaps branches who wish to could establish a "blacklist" of publishers or editors who have dealt unfairly with AusSI members, so that other members may avoid working for them, or take suitable precautions when accepting a job. Or perhaps the Society could produce a "kit" for freelance indexers, detailing how to avoid pitfalls in their relations with publishers.

Do any of the readers have any ideas?

Michael Wyatt

Indexing hits Northcote!!!

by Paul Michell

Local Studies Librarian- Northcote Library

On December 1st 1993, an article appeared in 'The Northcote Leader' discussing the work done by the Northcote Historical & Conservation Society in developing a local place and names index. Paul Michell, Local Studies Librarian at Northcote Library, now writes the first of an ongoing series on the beginnings and development of this 'local place names index'.

Northcote is a fairly large inner suburban city of Melbourne. It is approximately twelve minutes by car from Melbourne's centre and has a population of over 45,000 people. The first subdivisions in

Northcote occurred in 1839/40. As it is over 150 years old the area of Northcote has a very rich past and such historic events as these have seen their origins: the signing of the Batman treaty with the Aborigines for the founding of Melbourne occurring on the banks of the Merri Creek in Northcote, the first horse drawn tramway (in Station Street, Fairfield), and the founding of the Australian Labor Party. This is just a sampling of historic Northcote!

One of the things that has not been done is an index to parks and streets of the municipality. As the city was subdivided

over 150 years ago, not surprisingly, the naming of streets is an organic thing with many streets changing their names. As Local Studies Librarian with the Northcote Library I receive many enquiries and requests for information on how a certain street got its name and/or its significance. Just before Christmas a sub-committee with the Northcote Historical & Conservation Society was formed to trace the origin of these names.

In researching the street names, the Committee discovered the reasons how parks and streets acquired their names. Streets took the names of prominent people of the times or the view of the street, eg View Street or the origins of some of the inhabitants and so on.

If anyone is contemplating a project such as this a request to the City Valuer can result in a lot of saved searching. The Valuer's Department often keeps a record of street name changes which is invaluable for the index. Parish plans are important as well to show original subdivisions and streets.

One thing though that comes out of this is a much greater understanding of a community and its beginnings. Northcote is not alone in establishing an index of street and parks - Collingwood and Fitzroy have both published street indexes.

Further indexing currently taking place in Northcote is of *The History of Northcote* a history of the suburb published in 1928 without an index, and the full indexing of the Local History Collection of over 3000 items. More details will appear in subsequent issues of *AusSI Newsletter*.



BOOK REVIEW



Indexing Legal Materials

(Occasional Papers on Indexing No 2)

Ed. Elizabeth M. Moys et. al; Published by The Society of Indexers (U.K), 1993, vii, 86pp; ISBN 1-871577-14-4;

US\$ 18.00(Surface); US\$21.00(Air)

In the Nov/Dec issue of AusSI brief details were listed about this publication. Following is a review written by Kingley Siebel.

There have been few instructive writings on law indexing, so this is a welcome practical guide. The Introduction quotes Dorothy Thomas (one of the few) who emphasised that indexing the law is "notoriously rigorous" (the term 'notorious' having a particular legal usage - publicly, rather than unfavourably, known). Chapter 1 is historical and Chapter 2 introduces 'legal material' falling into 'primary' and 'secondary' sources. In the former are mainly legislation, law reports and digests etc., and in the latter are books of authority, practice or precedent books, encyclopaedic works and law journals etc. (not in any order of importance).

Chapter 5 contains sound advice: (a) that law indexers are 'not in the business of telling readers *what* the law is, only *where* it is to be found'; (b) 'when it comes to converting into words the concepts chosen for inclusion in the index, the special importance of *words* to lawyers must be recognised' (my emphasis). The latter cannot be stressed too much and means that unless the words used in the law are recognised and understood by the indexer they cannot be correctly indexed. [A recent example illustrates this. A law index contained the phrasal heading 'Remoteness of damages'. There is no such phrase in law. The expression is 'Remoteness of damage' (injury or harm); if remoteness is found the court will not award damages (compensation)]. This chapter then deals with phrasal terms some of which may not be familiar to non-law indexers (trespass to goods); compound expressions which must not be broken up or inverted (charging orders); terms which have special legal meanings

(cause, discovery, use) and free term v. controlled vocabulary.

Chapter 8 looks at tabling (Cases and Statutes - or Acts) which are peculiar to legal books, reports and major works, but Tables of Cases Judicially Considered has been overlooked. Lawyers probably use this table more than Cases or Acts. In Australia these tables are of particular importance because of the jurisdictional differences. An apt example is the criminal law, where some States adopt the common law and others have a codified system, so interpretation of terms in the latter may not apply in the former States. However, tables of cases and statutes are increasingly being computer generated by the larger law publishers but Cases Judicially Considered require human intervention. (See the A&NZ Citator to UK Reports, and the UK Current Law Citator which are similar publications)

I return to Chs 3, 4 and 6 (and omit 7: Indexing EC materials) in which I have some difficulty. Ch 3 (Structure and design of indexes) distinguishes between 'classified' and 'specific' entry giving illustrations (Figs 4 and 5) both of which are unfortunately poor examples of either form. The editors (influenced by Andrew Green's paper, read at a BIAAL Conference, and which is quoted) conclude that 'The trend at present seems to be towards more specific indexes such as that reproduced as Fig.5. In this type of index, entries are made directly under nearly all significant words often in addition to their use as subheadings under generic terms'. Fig 5 obviously falls into that category of books which are commonly referred to as a 'law for the layman' and the index is not characteristic law index. However, in ch 4 there appears to be a change of mind. It says that 'While a classified structure may well be rejected for a particular publication, there is still plenty of scope for making use of the methods of classification in determining the contents of the index and how to devise the entries'. I am firmly of the conviction (as in Norman Knight) that any true law index must *begin* with classification. Specific structure follows by the simple rule of breaking up headings which have too many subs - usually more than a column or two. An

example that comes to mind is a major index where the heading 'Contract' took up 18 columns. I was able to break it up under 28 headings by making headings out of a number of subs (accord and satisfaction; breach; consideration; formation; implied terms etc.) and by adding 19 cross references (*see also* Conflicts of laws*, Fraud and misrepresentation, Specific performance etc). There are of course times when some headings cannot be broken up in this way. I can go on about this aspect of law indexing but this is not the place for it, and I feel certain that the editors will agree with my supplementation to their writing.

Chapter 6 (Form of entries and references) seems to stray from another important aspect of law indexing. In discussing 'singular and plural' forms of headings particularly, the editors adopt the 'countability theory' (how much, how many). For this reason almost all the examples in the book are expressed in the plural form (Appeals, Contracts, Gifts etc) when the legal terminology for these is in the singular - see any Dictionary of legal terms. The Acts Interpretation Act says that 'words in the singular number include words in the plural and words in the plural number include the singular'. The Act goes on to give the defined terms (document, record, Minister, affidavit, day, month etc.) in the singular. This pattern is followed in all other Acts. Indexes to The Law Reports (see Fig 6) and other major UK and Australian report series and encyclopaedic works use singular headings and subheadings. The plural is only used to refer to services (Roads, Railways), some phrasal expressions (Crown proceedings) and collective headings (Hawkers and pedlars). Another good reason is that some English words when used in the law have a different meaning in the singular and in the plural (account/accounts; cost/costs; damage/damages; election/elections etc). It is only when one encounters the Legal Thesauri (both UK and Australian) that there is a complete reversal; almost all expressions are in the plural. The UK Legal Thesaurus falls into this trap in its Introduction. In attempting to explain how a single sentence in law may need more than one entry it uses (*inter alia*) the

heading 'Contracts' to index 'consent to a contract of marriage'. Most legal doctrines (Declaration, Injunction, Mistake) and legal subject headings (Appeal, Company, Guarantee, Mortgage) are expressed in the singular. Plural usage has (incorrectly) been introduced by the thesauri, perhaps because plurals are often used in common parlance. The law is more precise.

Chapter 6 includes a section on synonyms, antonyms and homographs but the discussion is limited. My advice is that synonyms are to be avoided because they can lead to pitfalls. I read a judgment which said that 'it is for the Court to decide whether terms are synonymous (if the Statute had not shown them as antonyms)' and which decided that 'a hostile witness is synonymous with an adverse or unreliable witness.' (In normal English usage we would not equate hostility with unreliability). Another reason to steer clear of synonyms unless there is certainty, is that in many Acts words are defined 'for the purpose of this section' or '...this Part' and hence those words do not carry the same meaning for other parts of the Act. Accessory and accomplice are used even by some legal writers as if they are synonyms, but there is a subtle difference and accomplice is giving way to 'Complicity' particularly by writers in criminal law where the usage occurs more often.

I do not, in spite of expressing myself on a few matters, wish to give the impression that this is not a worthwhile contribution to the literature on indexing, and more particularly to law indexing. Quite the contrary. It contains very valuable directions for the would-be law indexer and has brought to notice many important and peculiar facets of law indexing that are not encountered by non-law indexers. Indexers who have no acquaintance with the law will find this book enticing and lively reading. In the face of a dearth of publishing material the bibliography of works cited in the text is another welcome addition and so is the detailed index.

It may have been expanded** but may then have become too large for the Society's Occasional Paper series.

*A misprint on p29 seems to give the impression that Conflict of laws is concerned with 'country' and 'nationals'. That is only partly correct. In cases of conflict the court determines the system of law by reference to which the parties' rights may be ascertained. It concerns the *lex loci* (the law of the place where the issue arose) or the *lex fori* (the law of the place where the action is brought). It arises like a thief in the most unexpected situations - bankruptcy, tort, marriage etc.

** Consolidation of law indexes (some involving two volumes of 1000 pages each) require special skills, controlled vocabulary, altering headings, going repeatedly back to the text, rephrasing entries, allocating some entries to different headings etc. Indexing of Statutes is another specialism (see the recent Subject Index of Legislation Victoria). Statutory annotations require a process of abstraction with which indexers are familiar (see Victorian Statute Annotations 6th Ed 1986 and Supplement). 'Words and phrases' is a heading in all major legal works. A five volume (UK) and a three volume (Aust) publication denote the importance of this tool for lawyers. Indexers should be on the lookout for expressions to be extracted for this heading. They are as important as definitions.

The Federation Index 1889-1913...an update

The volunteers from the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies working on the data entry for this project are to be congratulated as they have completed their allocation of the births microfiche for the period 1889 to 1896. Well done!

Data entry for the deaths 1889 to 1896 is progressing steadily, however, members are still welcome to join the Federation Index project and offers to help can be addressed to the Volunteer Co-Ordinators care of the Libraries of either the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies or the Genealogical society of Victoria.

The Victorian Pioneers Index on CD-ROM

A revised edition of the Victorian Pioneers Index 1837-1888 on CD-ROM is currently being prepared by INFORMIT to replace the first edition which has now sold-out.

John Scarce

**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF
INDEXERS:**

GPO Box 1251
Melbourne VIC 3001

President: George Levick
(03) 418 7344

Vice Pres.: Mary Long
(03) 286 9125

Secretary: Ian Odgers
(03) 418 7275

Treasurer: Joyce Gillespie
(03) 654 8527

or (03) 710 1270

Editor: c/- Elizabeth Baratto
(03) 270 6666

Fax: c/- (03) 270 6699

e-mail: c/- AusSI@isb.csiro.au

Committee Members:

Max McMaster: (03) 571 6341

Heather Hillman: (055) 62 5084

Rosemary Bunnage: (03) 565 2605

John Simkin: (03) 429 8817

Josephine McGovern: (03) 596 1555

NSW BRANCH

PO Box R598
Royal Exchange SYDNEY, 2000

President: Alan Walker
(02) 380 5875

Fax: (02) 361 0651

Secretary: Michael Wyatt
(02) 281 0460

Treasurer: Kingsley Siebel
(02) 477 3149

Committee: Garry Cousins, Mary
Turner,
Lorraine Doyle, Christine Winning

ACT REGION BRANCH

GPO Box 2069
Canberra ACT 2601

President: Geraldine Triffitt
(06) 246 1177

Fax: (06) 249 7310

Secretary: Jenni Cole
(06) 243 4211

Treasurer: Susan MacDougall
(06) 201 2645

Committee: Olga Howell
Laurel Tunks
Robert Hyslop
Barbara Dickens

Next Deadline - 12 May 1994



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).

