

# ANZSI Newsletter

 Newsletter of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Inc.

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## ANZSI News



Last month I mentioned that the ASI Digital Trends Task Force (DTTF) had developed an Indexers Charter Proposal. This was put to the vote of the members of the International Digital Publishing Forum. The resultant vote from IDPF for the establishment of the Indexers Working Group was astoundingly supportive. This is a

monumental achievement for indexing.

### Who is the International Digital Publishing Forum?

To quote their website <<http://idpf.org/about-us>>:

The International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF) is the global trade and standards organization dedicated to the development and promotion of electronic publishing and content consumption.

The work of the IDPF promotes the development of electronic publishing applications and products that will benefit creators of content, makers of reading systems, and consumers. The IDPF develops and maintains the EPUB content publication standard that enables the creation and transport of reflowable digital books and other types of content as digital publications that are interoperable between disparate EPUB-compliant reading devices and applications.

The IDPF welcomes book, newspaper, journal and magazine publishers, booksellers, software and reading system developers, authors, and other groups interested in digital reading to join their organization.

The goals of the IDPF are to:

- Promote industry-wide adoption of electronic publishing through standards development, conferences, best practices, and demonstrations of proven technology.
- Develop, publish, and maintain common standards (e.g. EPUB) relating to electronic publications and promote the successful adoption of these specifications.
- Encourage interoperable implementations of EPUB publications and reading systems and provide a forum for resolution of interoperability issues.

- Identify, evaluate, and recommend standards created by other bodies related to electronic publishing.
- Provide a forum for the discussion of issues and technologies related to electronic publishing.
- Accommodate differences in language, culture, reading and learning styles, and individual abilities.

### Who belongs to IDPF?

The website describes their membership as consisting of 'academic, trade and professional publishers, hardware and software companies, digital content retailers, libraries, educational institutions, accessibility advocates and related organizations whose common goals are to advance the competitiveness and exposure of digital publishing.' This mixture is reflected in their list of international members at <<http://idpf.org/membership/members>>.

### The International Digital Publishing Forum (IDPF) approves Indexes Working Group

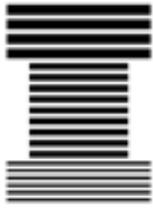
Here is a copy of the ASI media release for 3 February:

The American Society for Indexing (ASI) is proud to report that at the end of January 2012, the IDPF approved the Indexes Charter Proposal to establish an Indexes Working Group. The proposal was approved by a vote of 69 yes, 1 no, and 1 abstention.

The Indexes Working Group is now identifying additional participants and setting its meeting calendar and agenda. Any representative of an IDPF organization member (the IDPF consists of 300+ publishers, organizations, software & device developers, etc.) can participate and a small number of invited experts, who are not IDPF representatives, can also be included. It is hoped that participants will include representatives of publishers, eReader developers, software tool developers, and librarians, as well as indexers who have experience with technologies, such as XML, HTML, and online & web indexing. Interested parties should contact David K Ream, co-chair of ASI's DTTF at <[daveream@levtechinc.com](mailto:daveream@levtechinc.com)>.

The Indexes Charter Proposal team, consisting of ASI Digital Trends Task Force (DTTF) members and IDPF members, completed the proposal:

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**Australian and New Zealand  
Society of Indexers Inc.**

## **ANZSI Newsletter**

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### **About the newsletter**

The newsletter is published monthly 11 times a year, with combined issues for January and February. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the society. For details about contributions and editorial matters, refer to the ANZSI website at <[www.anzsi.org](http://www.anzsi.org)>.

### **Advertising rates**

Full page: \$200.00

Half page \$100.00

Quarter page: \$50.00.

These are all per issue – the former annual rate has been discontinued.

### **ANZSI contact information**

ANZSI's general email address is:

<[ANZSIinfo@anzsi.org](mailto:ANZSIinfo@anzsi.org)>.

Further contact details in PDF format are available on the ANZSI website at <[www.anzsi.org](http://www.anzsi.org)>.

## **Adjourned Annual General Meeting**

Notice is given that the adjourned Annual General Meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers Inc. will reconvene at 7.15 pm on Wednesday 4 April 2012, at the Jubilee Hall, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Kew (premises at corner of High Street and Pakington Street, Kew Melway 45 D6). Note that the starting time is later than that announced in the preliminary notice in February.

The meeting will be preceded by a meeting of The VIC (the Victorian Indexing Club) to discuss 'Do ebooks need indexes', details of which may be found in the Events section of the website.

The sole business of the meeting will be to consider and approve the audited financial statement for the financial year 2010-11. It is anticipated that the financial statement will be received from the auditor early in March when it will be posted on the website.

As provided in the Constitution (Clause H4), the quorum is fifteen members personally present and each entitled to vote.

Members who wish to lodge a proxy for the adjourned meeting may do so, using the form available on the website. Any open proxies lodged for the meeting convened in September 2011 will still be valid provided they nominated the President as proxy.

The financial statement and the proxy form will be found on the ANZSI website at the following link: <[www.anzsi.org/site/calendar\\_details.asp?id=238](http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=238)>.

*Michael J Ramsden, Secretary*

## **Preliminary notice**

**NSW and ACT Branches of ANZSI  
invite members to participate in a  
weekend regional conference  
at Peppers Craigieburn Bowral  
on Saturday and Sunday 28–29 July 2012**

### **From pbooks to ebooks: Focusing on digital publishing**

There will be no cost to members to attend this regional conference except for accommodation should members decide to stay at the conference venue.

Accommodation has been reserved for single and twin/double rooms at \$179 and \$208 per room per night. Details of registering for accommodation together with the complete program will be available later on the ANZSI website.

Please send expressions of interest if you wish to attend this conference to Sherrey Quinn at <[sherreyquinn@gmail.com](mailto:sherreyquinn@gmail.com)>.

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(<http://code.google.com/p/epub-revision/wiki/IndexesCharterProposal>)

in late November 2011 after public peer review in the U.S. and internationally. At a December meeting, the IDPF board had unanimously approved putting the Indexes Charter Proposal to a vote by the full membership.

ASI ([www.asindexing.org](http://www.asindexing.org)) established the Digital Trends Task Force in mid-2011. One goal was to influence the inclusion of indexes in eBooks. To achieve this end, ASI became a member of the IDPF ([www.idpf.org](http://www.idpf.org)) and began working on a proposal to better integrate indexes as components of eBooks formatted using EPUB 3.0.

For information on the activities of the DTF beyond the EPUB standard, e-mail [dttf@asindexing.org](mailto:dttf@asindexing.org), or visit [www.asindexing.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3647](http://www.asindexing.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3647). LinkedIn members can search for the discussion group 'ASI Digital Trends Task Force'.

### ANZSI involvement

ANZSI Council will be discussing the possibility of joining IDPF at its meeting in mid March as well as how it can assist, formation of an ANZSI group, representatives

etc. Initially I will be the ANZSI representative and I ask members to contact me if they would like to assist.

### March Council meeting

Talking about the March Council meeting this will bring the entire Council together with all the branch Presidents in Melbourne for an extended meeting.

### Digital Publishing Australia

At a local level members might be interested in Digital Publishing Australia. Their website <http://digitalpublishingaustralia.org.au> includes information about digital publishing, case studies, and lists of learning resources to help keep up to date.

### National Year of Reading

February 14 saw the official launch of the National Year of Reading [www.love2read.org.au](http://www.love2read.org.au). 'The National Year of Reading 2012 is about children learning to read and keen readers finding new sources of inspiration. It's about supporting reading initiatives while respecting the oral tradition of storytelling. It's about helping people discover and rediscover the magic of books. And most of all, it's about Australians becoming a nation of readers.'

Mary Russell

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## Indexing letters – The VIC February 2012

At the VIC meeting in February I discussed indexing letters. And just what do we mean by 'letters'? *Macquarie Dictionary* defines a letter as 'communication written or printed addressed to a person or number of persons'. *Oxford Concise* however adds that it needs to be 'sent by post or messenger'.



Indexers can index letters in a number of ways and I highlighted a few different situations, using a selection of books from my local library as examples.

1. Letter books (correspondence books)
2. Letters to one person or organisation
3. Collections of letters by different people
4. Letters between two people
5. Letters by one person

### 1. Letter / Correspondence books

Letter books or correspondence books are collections of letters to an organisation or department. They are large bound books, often with an A-Z section at the front. When a letter is received it is pasted onto the next available page. An entry is made at the front, perhaps

under the appropriate letter of the alphabet, to indicate who the letter is from and the page it appears on. There may also be a subject entry. Since entries are added when letters are received, to find a letter from a specific person you need to scan the headings under a particular letter.

Helen Harris has set herself the task of creating an index to missing people found in the Victorian police correspondence records held in the Public Records Office, Victoria. Helen comments, 'With over 2,000 boxes of material covering the period 1853 to 1940, the search for these letters is the task of a lifetime'.

These are letters written by people outside Australia to the police department in Victoria in an attempt to locate 'missing' individuals. The persons sought could be long-lost relatives or friends; husbands or wives who had deserted their spouses; suspected bigamists; or even people who had been in Victoria and who had committed a crime while overseas.

<http://helendoxfordharris.com.au/historical-indexes/index-to-missing-people>

### 2. Letters to one person or organisation

These letter books are examples of letters to one person or organisation. Other examples include:

- *Letters from Victorian pioneers*

This is a published collection of letters addressed by Victorian pioneers to His Excellency Charles Joseph

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(Indexing letters, continued from previous page)

La Trobe Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria. The letters are grouped into letters from first settlers, those from various parts of Victoria and Aborigines. Notes about the people and locations have been added. There is a detailed index combining subjects and letter writers. Items in notes are indicated with 'n' (*Letters from Victorian pioneers: a series of papers on the early occupation of the Colony, the Aborigines, etc., addressed by Victorian pioneers to His Excellency Charles Joseph La Trobe, Esq., Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Victoria*, edited Thomas Francis Bride. Melbourne: Heinemann, 1969, c1898.)

- Letters to the Editor of periodicals

Letters to the Editor of journals or newspapers are another example of letters to one person or organisation that indexers have to consider if they are indexing the contents of the journal.

An indexer would need to indicate the letter, eg. by ending the title with [letter to the editor] or [letter]. They would also need to allocate appropriate subject terms and determine style for replies to the letter such as Reply [to Mary Russell's Title of letter]. And remember to allocate the same subject headings as the original letter.

### 3. Collections of letters

A collection of letters is put together on a particular theme or because they are significant in some way. Letters have been written by different people. *Letters from Victorian pioneers* is also a collection of letters.

- *The Oxford book of letters*

This is a collection of more than 300 letters spanning five centuries. The letters are arranged roughly chronologically by author and there is a brief biography of the letter writer and editors notes where relevant. The book contains an index of writers, an index of recipients, but no other indexes.

(*The Oxford book of letters*, edited by Frank Kermodé and Anita Kermodé. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.)

### 4. Letters between two people

Letters between two people make for interesting reading as you can see both sides of the correspondence.

- *84 Charing Cross Road*

Helene Hanff's book, *84 Charing Cross Road*, follows her correspondence from New York to the book shop that once existed at 84 Charing Cross Road. It was so interesting that it was made into a film. There is no index in the version I have!

(*84 Charing Cross Road* by Helene Hanff, London: Futura, 1976)

- *Bert & Ned: the correspondence of Albert Tucker and Sidney Nolan*

This is a fascinating book with a lengthy introduction by Patrick McCaughey, interspersed with paintings by Tucker and Nolan. The letters or postcards are

in chronological order and footers give background information or clarifications. There is a detailed subject index to the whole book.

(*Bert & Ned: the correspondence of Albert Tucker and Sidney Nolan*, edited by Patrick McCaughey. Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Publishing, 2006)

### 5. Letters by one person

This is probably the most common form of published letters. Often from famous people, they could be letters to one person, or to multiple people.

- *Rose Paterson's Illalong letters 1873-1888*

Rose Paterson was born into a squatter family and spent most of her life at Illalong, an isolated sheep station in western NSW, where she brought up her seven children in straitened circumstances. The Illalong letters are to her sister Nora. One of Rose's children was Andrew Barton 'Banjo' Paterson. The letters were rescued and edited with comments by Banjo's biographer Colin Roderick. The index is like an index to a biography.

This one sided correspondence to the same person is almost like an autobiography, as she describes everyday life and personal details written to her sister.

(*Rose Paterson's Illalong letters*, edited by Colin Roderick. East Roseville, N.S.W. : Kangaroo Press, 2000)

- *Beatrix Potter's letters: a selection*

This is a selection of about 400 letters from a collection of about 1400. Being written by Beatrix Potter they have the added delight of her drawings in the letters. The index is in tiny font and looks as though many subheadings were removed to squeeze the index into the eight pages available. As a result there are several long runs of undifferentiated page numbers, hiding a level of detail from the reader. I can understand that the indexer may have had difficulty adding subheadings to the heading 'sheep or rabbits', but with over 50 page numbers given for her husband, surely useful subheadings could have been used?

(*Beatrix Potter's letters: a selection*, selected by Judy Taylor. London: Frederick Warne, 1989.)

- *The complete letters of Oscar Wilde*

It is a sweeping statement to call these 'complete'. I wonder if further letters have been found. This 1230 page book has a 33-page general index. There is also a separate index of recipients of the letters. On a quick look this means the person may not be listed in the general index. There are no long runs of undifferentiated pages in this index; there are lots of subheadings to help find the information you want. However the index only covers named persons, places, and publications, plays etc. There are no general subject headings.

(*The complete letters of Oscar Wilde*, edited by Merlin Holland and Rupert Hart-Davis. London: Fourth Estate, 2000.)

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*(Indexing letters, continued from previous page)*

### **Indexing letters compared to indexing autobiographies or biographies**

Indexing letters is very like indexing an autobiography or biography but there are some differences. Letters are by their very nature often brief and lacking narrative flow. Shared knowledge between the letter writer and receiver means details are left out. For example 'Visited the Gallery and saw George's latest work' would be understood by the recipient, but an outsider asks 'Which Gallery?' 'Who is George?' 'What was the work referred to?' This is where you hope the editor of the letters is able to answer the questions with notes.

Letters offer a level of detail that may not be covered by an autobiography or biography. For example there may be repeated mention of meals eaten at certain places and even what was consumed. Hence you may need to index references to meals eaten at a particular place and perhaps even what was consumed.

Douglas Matthews' article on 'Indexing published letters' in *The Indexer* (2001, 22:135–41) noted 'The intimacy of letters can make indexers feel intrusive and embarrassed'. This article by Matthews is a useful source of additional tips on indexing letters.

*Mary Russell*

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## **Indexing indaba – life in the human cloud**



**M**uch as I'd love to believe that this story is true, I suspect that it's nothing more than an urban myth. It involves a rural-based American indexer and her rather unusual way of receiving manuscripts, which were said to be routinely dropped into her paddock by a FedEx plane passing overhead. This was of course before any of us had heard of email or PDFs.

### **Who's bidding?**

Of the eight respondents, six had signed up with Elance. Of these, four had received work, one had not done any serious bidding or got any contracts, while one other had recently dropped the service as she hadn't received any work.

The four who had received work all joined up as newly established indexers and their comments indicated that Elance had played a positive role in helping them to build their businesses.

Three of these respondents no longer seek work through Elance. Two indicated that it was not worth their while anymore – one because she is able to get better paid work, the other because working with Elance employers is often more time consuming. The third respondent said that she was still tempted by some of the more interesting projects that come up from time to time, but that she was nervous about being discovered on Elance by publishers who now employ her for far higher rates. 'I feel torn between helping an author with a worthy idea but not a lot of money, and my fellow indexers who I would be letting down by accepting a lower rate,' she added.

One respondent bids for jobs on Elance when work from traditional publishers is slow as she likes to keep working steadily. She acknowledged the lower rates of pay but noted that many of these books fall into the areas of business and diet/nutrition which are a lot easier to index than her other work on scholarly books. They also allow for working from a PDF, thus eliminating the costs of printing. Another benefit she has found is that payments from Elance are prompt. 'Once the project is finished I'll have the amount direct-deposited within a week, whereas with traditional publishers I am lucky to get a cheque within a month – it's more like 45 to 60 days waiting for payment.'

Since those days we have seen technology transform indexing into the ideal telecommuting occupation. Little wonder then that there are now employment opportunities in this area on the freelancer job sites that have been sprouting up all over the internet. While Elance.com is probably the largest and the best known, others include oDesk.com, Guru.com, FreelanceSwitch.com, iFreelance.com and Freelancer.com. For those not familiar with how they work, the principle is similar to eBay, with employers posting jobs for specified periods of time during which contractors are able to submit bids.

For some time now, the broader writing community has been closely scrutinising these sites, spurring some widespread online discussion about their merits and flaws. It is a little surprising though, that while a good number of indexers have signed up as contractors, they seem to be having little or no conversation around this topic.

I recently put a call out on Index-L for indexers to write to me off list regarding their thoughts about and/or experiences of Elance. The response wasn't huge (five American and three Australian indexers) but the replies gave some insight into this method of obtaining work from an indexer's point of view. While the focus was on Elance, many of the points raised could be equally applied to other freelancer job sites.

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### **Who's hiring?**

It probably isn't a surprise that the typical employer described by the respondents was a self-publishing author. While traditional publishers are facing challenging times, the self-publishing industry is booming and producing books that look every bit as good as that put out by traditional publishers.

Though not as frequent, it seems that there are also some opportunities from authors whose traditional publishing contracts require them to supply an index.

Respondents described many of the authors as 'legitimate' and 'talented' although one advised asking them for sample chapters to help 'eliminate some of the undesirables'. It seems too that self-publishing authors, particularly those working on their first book, tend to have little or no knowledge about indexing. One respondent said that because of this she found that the experience 'involved more hand-holding'. Another respondent highlighted a potential hazard of working in such situations. She said: 'As indexers we may notice the odd change made to our work by an editor but this did not prepare me for the modifications made to my index by one author which showed how unfamiliar with indexing conventions she was.'

Pitching oneself to employers can be a time consuming process according to two of the respondents, although it is possible to reuse some information while at the same time creating a customised bid. Contractors also need to be aware that some employers are not genuinely committed to awarding a contract. They are simply testing the water and in the words of one respondent: 'Excuses such as "The project did not go ahead" offer little comfort when you've been mucked about.'

A lot can be learnt about employers from feedback and previous job histories, so where this information is available, contractors are well advised to do a little bit of checking up before submitting a bid.

### **Credible site or scammer's paradise?**

Two respondents raised the subject of Elance's credibility. One believed that 'the site's reputation is that of a credible freelance site.'

The other was more distrustful: 'I would proceed with caution. Just out of curiosity, I googled Elance and turned up all kinds of hits covering scams connected with Elance.'

When it comes to scams, Elance certainly has been around the block a few times although I suspect that most indexers would see through a lot of them. How many indexers wouldn't be suspicious of an employer requesting that an application be installed on their computer in order to conduct a test? That said, it is not impossible that a newbie indexer trying to build up a portfolio, might be lured by a potential employer into providing some 'spec work' – a small unpaid job as a test of their skills. While

it may appear to be a genuine screening process, there's every chance that this small job is all that the employer wants, before riding off into the sunset.

Elance's system for reporting violations, its Escrow payment system as well as its insistence that any communication between employers and contractors go through the website, are all protection measures. Of course, the last measure also affords Elance some protection against colluding employers and contractors trying to diddle the site out of its service fee.

### **Bidding – how low can you go?**

By now it is probably obvious that Elance has something of a reputation for poorly paid jobs, a subject which came up in virtually all of the responses. This view probably sums up what a lot of indexers feel about the site: 'The main problem I think is the rates I've seen for indexing projects on Elance are ridiculously low, sometimes so low I find them offensive.'

One respondent's observation that the 'the competition [on Elance] is so global', is a factor which unquestionably plays a big part in this. The on-average US\$1.00 to \$1.50 per page figure suggested might not come up to scratch for those living in countries such as the US or Australia, but there are many in other countries who would happily be paid this figure.

However, it's not all gloomy news as this respondent indicated:

'Here's one lesson I learned by accident. The rates clients list in their job description are negotiable, so don't write them off because they're posting unacceptably low rates.'

'I had submitted a bid on a business book at my usual rate and realized after the fact that the author had asked for a too-low rate. Embarrassed that I hadn't read more carefully, I wrote to the author to apologize, while explaining why a reasonable range of rates was considerably higher than what he had listed.'

'He wrote back, excited to talk to me about indexing. He had gotten a lot of replies from "indexers" who he suspected didn't really know what they were doing or didn't speak very good English. He didn't have any idea what a reasonable rate was when he posted the job, and took a stab in the dark. He hired me for the job at the rate I suggested (that index was another story in itself), and he was thrilled with the index.'

This response echoes what quite a number of Elance contractors in the broader writing community have discovered in their relationships with employers. While it's true that self-publishing authors operate without the advance payment that an author with a traditional publishing contract would have, and they often operate on a shoestring budget, they may not necessarily be looking to Elance for a cheap contractor. It seems that

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*(Indexing Indaba, continued from previous page)*

many turn to Elance because they simply have no idea where to begin locating the services they need to put their book together and they also have little idea of what these services might be worth.

By looking at the job histories created on Elance, it is sometimes possible to uncover a fair bit about the making of a book if the author has also hired services such as ghostwriting, book design, editing and proofreading.

### **Public profiles and contractor privacy**

The only mention of privacy came from the respondent concerned about being found on Elance by her better paying traditional publishers. Surprisingly, most contractors make their earnings available for all to see but this is easily remedied by ticking a few privacy setting boxes.

Elance's recent change to its policy on public display names may be of greater concern. Contractors with individual accounts used to have free reign but are now required to use their personal names, although using an initial for surnames is permitted. Personal names were already used by many contractors but for those not keen on having their cover blown or feeling a bit miffed at losing their cute username, there is the option of upgrading to a business account. As you would expect, this involves a fee.

### **The wrap**

It's clear from the responses that Elance can offer real opportunities for indexers wishing to build up their portfolios. However, the often low rates of pay and the time consuming processes of submitting bids and working with self-publishing authors make it questionable as to whether it would be viable in the long term.

Regardless of these issues, indexing work will continue to have a place on Elance. Self-publishing isn't going away anytime soon and as noted by the American publisher Louise Burke (New York Times, 27/01/2009), traditional publishers are known to source new material by looking at reader comments about self-published books sold online. Self-publishing, in her view, is 'no longer a dirty word.'

In sharing their experiences though, the respondents have highlighted one very important area. By signing up as Elance contractors they (probably unknowingly) became vital ambassadors for indexing. Their experiences show that they've often been the first connection that an author has had with an indexer; they've usually had to offer guidance about indexing; and as in the case of one respondent they've been able to negotiate higher rates of pay by taking the time to promote the value of indexing.

With many thanks to the indexers who responded to my question on Index-L.

*Nikki Davis*

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# Quiet achievers in indexing – Michael Ramsden

## Who has been the greatest influence on your career?

The earliest influence was my parents who regularly bought books for myself and my brother, and especially my mother who read to us each evening until we were each able to read for ourselves. I had a considerable number of books, including all of Arthur Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons* series, all carefully listed in an exercise book in author order.

At the School of Librarianship in the North Western Polytechnic (now the University of North London) I came under the influence of the late Jack Mills who taught classification. Jack was an enthusiastic exponent of what was then the still relatively new theory of faceted classification.

Jean Hagger was responsible for bringing me, with my family, to Australia and for encouraging me, and my wife Sylvia, to join the Australian Society of Indexers. Though not founding members I think we joined in the first year. It was also Jean, by example as well as suggestion, who prompted me to take up freelance indexing in retirement.

However, of these I would name Jack Mills as the greatest influence. He was a teacher who was not only thoroughly expert in his subject but also able to communicate that enthusiasm to his students. He it was who fired my interest in classification and the broader field of subject indexing. Eventually I became myself a lecturer in the field at the College of Librarianship Wales and then at RMIT, and an author in the field, and now an indexer.

## How did you come to an indexing career?

Barrett Reid was responsible for my first commission. In 1984 Everard Baillieu was seeking an indexer for a brief publication entitled *Both Sides of the Hill*, which was to be an annexure to 'The Second Twenty-Fourth Australian Infantry Battalion', a history by R.P. Serle. Barrie recommended me and I undertook the task as a pro bono project. The work was published in 1985. In writing these notes I had a look at the index. I am not sure that I would hold it up as a great example.

I undertook only one other contract prior to my retirement from RMIT and that was to index *The Bradman Albums*, something of a labour of love for one

who has been a cricket tragic since the resumption of first class cricket following the end of the war.

It was Jean Hagger who turned my thoughts to indexing as an occupation in retirement. She had taken it up herself as a retirement occupation. By then she was running down her activity in the field and passed on a number of contracts as well as introducing me to Hyland House.



Though I have probably indexed around 200 titles since 1995 I would hesitate to describe myself as a career indexer though I would like to think of myself as a professional indexer. It is a means of intellectual stimulation and a source of supplementary, discretionary income in retirement. However, librarianship to indexing is a natural progression for one who has always regarded information organisation skills as the hallmark of a librarian.

## What do you see as your greatest achievement?

My greatest achievement, together with Sylvia, has been to raise a family of three children successfully. We are proud of our family which now extends to a fourth generation with the recent addition of a great granddaughter. Professionally the highlights of my career have been election by the Council as President of the Association of Assistant Librarians, election as a Fellow of ALIA, appointment to the foundation professoriate at RMIT, and the index to *Plants in Action* published by Macmillan which was one of three indexes commended by the panel of judges in a year when the medal was not awarded. I also enjoy my role as Secretary of ANZSI.

## What has been your biggest challenge?

If one is going to run a business as a sole proprietor one must sell oneself. I don't think I am very good at self-promotion and I find it difficult.

## How do you try to achieve work-life balance?

I think this is easier for me than for someone for whom indexing is a full-time occupation. In the earlier years of my retirement we made a number of trips by car around Australia for periods of two months or so. The trips were planned several weeks or months ahead and I simply did not take on any contracts for the period for which we planned to be away.

*(continued on next page)*

*(Quiet achievers – Michael Ramsden, continued from previous page)*

### **What do you like most about your work? What do you like least?**

In many ways the greatest pleasure is the luxury of working from home after years of commuting into the city, in the later years by road. Travel became quite stressful and nowadays I listen to the road reports on the morning radio and am thankful that I am not part of the traffic struggling along the Eastern Freeway!

Many of the books are interesting and one learns from one's work as one can always learn from reading. Compiling the index to Anne Blainey's *I am Melba* (which won the Australian prize for biography) was a pure joy; on the other hand some titles (such as accountancy textbooks) are hard work, and tight deadlines can put one under pressure.

### **What advice would you offer to indexers just starting out?**

Be patient. Allow yourself time to build up a business. Don't be afraid to promote yourself, but don't make exaggerated claims that you cannot substantiate or meet. Don't be afraid to seek help or advice from more experienced indexers – we can all learn from each other.

### **If you could dine with a famous historical figure, who would it be?**

There have been many heroes in history, from Leonidas and the Spartans who held the pass at Thermopylae, through Alfred the Great to Nelson Mandela. Three historical figures have long had special appeal for me: Nelson, Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill. They are, if you like, my personal heroes.

The earliest figure to appeal was Lord Nelson. He was perhaps the greatest naval commander in history and re-defined the meaning of naval victory. I can remember, when I was about seven, being taken to see *Lady Hamilton*, starring Laurence Olivier as Nelson and Vivien Leigh as Emma, Lady Hamilton. It was released in 1941. Olivier's performance conveys Nelson's undoubted charisma and magnetism, which would certainly make him an entertaining dinner companion.

Lincoln was probably the greatest President in US history. He had little formal education but qualified as a lawyer. He was elected president in November 1860 and inaugurated in March 1861. He was President throughout the Civil War and his greatest achievements were, by his leadership, to save the Union and to bring about the abolition of slavery in the United States. He was also one of the great orators of history. Which one of us is not stirred by the Gettysburg Address? The occasion was the dedication of a cemetery for Union soldiers killed in the Battle of Gettysburg. Edward Everett, a professional orator, delivered a lengthy oration; Lincoln, in ten sentences, summed up the significance of the occasion perfectly, in what has become one of the great speeches of history.

My greatest hero is Winston Churchill. He led a full and remarkable life as soldier, journalist, author and statesman. In a political career spanning 56 years he held every great office in the UK government except that of Foreign Secretary. Above all, as wartime Prime Minister, he rallied the British people as probably no-one else could have done. Like Lincoln he was a great orator with a high command of the English language which he used to great effect. I was too young to take in his speeches in 1940, but I do remember the effect they had. He would probably monopolise the conversation to a greater extent than Nelson or Lincoln, but he would be worth hearing!

I also share a common ancestor with Winston Churchill. My maternal grandmother was born Matilda Entwistle. Her seventeen times great grandfather was Sir Christopher Conyers, who in 1415 married Ellen Rolleston. Ellen's parents were Thomas Rolleston and Lady Beatrice Hawley. Lady Beatrice's parents were Lord Thomas Hawley and his wife Margaret. One of their descendants was Sir Winston Churchill.

### **If you were a letter of the alphabet, which letter would you be and why?**

I think I prefer to be in a big pond, so I will rule out the more infrequent letters such as F, J, K, Q, V, Y or Z. The most frequently occurring letter in English is E, but I think I will go for M. This is my first initial, but also my maternal grandfather's family moved to England from Scotland at the end of the 18th century, so just think of all the surnames beginning with Mac or Mc!

*Michael describes himself as a family man, opera lover, cricket tragic, retired librarian/academic and part-time indexer. The photo shows him with his wife Sylvia, daughter Caroline, granddaughter Bridget and great granddaughter Gracelyn.*

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## **News from New Zealand**

Our major event this year will be taking place on 24/25 March, at our favourite Elder Family Matters rooms in Ghuznee Street, Wellington. It will consist of a six-hour training course in web indexing and metadata on Saturday, and a separate informal forum updating us on all aspects of indexing on Sunday morning, with a Branch committee meeting on Sunday afternoon.

We are very fortunate that Glenda Browne is coming to New Zealand to run the course and to be available for the Sunday forum. I hope you can come on both days, but if not you are welcome to arrange for your attendance on just one day or part of a day. You can find full details and a registration form at: <[www.anzsi.org/site/calendar\\_details.asp?id=240](http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=240)> and <=241>.

I encourage you to take this opportunity to enter more fully into the 21st century in our chosen field. How will what we have done to date go forward? I look forward to meeting many of you in March.

*Julie Daymond-King*

# Quiet achievers in indexing – Barry Howarth

## Who has been the greatest influence on your career?

I can't say that anyone has been an influence on my career as a back-of-book indexer.

## How did you come to an indexing career?

I came to indexing when I was working as a research assistant on one of the Bicentennial projects – *The Australian People: An Encyclopedia of the Nation, Its People and Their Origins* (ed. James Jupp, 1988). As the project neared completion the subject of an index came up and I volunteered and was given the job. It was a very large book – a million words, with dozens of authors – which needed an analytical index to draw together topics that had been treated separately in relation to many ethnic groups.

So I went to the Australian National University library and looked at a few books on indexing – my only experience with indexing was as a user of indexes, not a maker. The most useful book I found was G Norman Knight, *Indexing, The Art of*. So I started work, with no Macrex, Cindex or Sky to assist me (this was late 1987/early 1988) and just Word substituting for index cards. Unfortunately, after a few weeks, I was told to stop work as the money put aside to pay for the indexing hadn't. So I moved on to other research work. The *Australian People* appeared with just an index of proper names of people and places, which to my mind was a real shame. So, a false start to my indexing career.

The next opportunity came in 1993, when I was working in the Department of Economic History in the Research School of Social Studies at the ANU. The professor, Graeme Snooks, was editing a collection of conference papers and I again volunteered to do the index. This time the index was completed and published, after which I indexed all of Graeme Snooks's books up until 2003, when I retired from the ANU. By this time I had undertaken quite a few freelance indexing projects outside my ANU work, and that has continued to the present.

## What do you see as your greatest achievement?

## What has been your biggest challenge?

I can't say that I have had a 'greatest achievement'.

What I felt was my biggest challenge – and at the end I felt was something like my 'greatest achievement' – was

indexing Robin Haines, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (2004). This is a detailed study of Trevelyan and his administration of the relief program for the Irish famine (1845–50). It is part biography, part administrative history and part polemic – Haines felt that Trevelyan had been unjustly treated by historians, particularly Irish nationalists. So it was a complex and multi-faceted work

and definitely a challenge. I was very satisfied with the result and very gratified when I received a copy from the author with a note saying 'To Barry, indexer extraordinaire'. However, some years later, when I was preparing a one-day workshop on 'indexing for editors' for the Canberra Society of Editors and looking for examples from indexes I had done, I found some pretty bad mistakes in that index. So, not so 'extraordinaire' after all.

Another source of satisfaction was to have an author tell me that, after reading my index, he had discovered things in his book he hadn't realised were there. So I felt I must have done a good job. It also reinforced my view that, contrary to the view of some, authors are not the best people to index their own books – they are too close to their work and don't have the objectivity, nor the skills, of a professional indexer.

## How do you try to achieve work-life balance?

Achieving work-life balance is relatively easy for me. I work at home and certainly don't work full-time (except in August–October). Even when I'm busy, I take the time to walk my old dog, and, if my children need me, I give my time to them and make up the work time with late nights.

## What do you like most about your work? What do you like least?

What I like most about indexing is the intellectual challenge each new project presents: problems to solve – each project presents unique problems and there is more than one way to solve each problem – and the satisfaction of their neat solution. It is a good feeling to know you have made an important contribution to a good publication.

*(continued on next page)*



*(Quiet achievers – Barry Howarth, continued from previous page)*

What I dislike most about indexing is that there is never enough time to do the job properly. Often I look back at a job and feel I could have done it differently and better, if I had had the time. In fact, once I have finished an index, I feel I'm now ready to do the index properly. While there is also great satisfaction in doing a good job under time constraints, indexers should not, almost always, have to work like this.

It seems that authors/departments/publishers are unable to manage their projects efficiently (and by 'efficiently' I don't mean 'cheaply', which seems to be its current meaning) – that is, planning and organising to be on time. The worst example of this was when I was given an 800-page report and told I had four days in which to index it. I made it clear that any index done in that time would be very superficial, but it seems they didn't care: the report had to have an index – the quality didn't matter. Unfortunately, trying to convince authors/departments/publishers of the value of a good quality index is like Canute trying to stop the sea of economic rationalism and the concomitant view that cheap is what is wanted, near enough is good enough, quality is too expensive.

Consequently, I don't index 'academic' books any more since, all too often of late, they are poorly thought out, badly written and not edited properly and, therefore, a headache to index. It seems that publishers won't pay for books to be properly edited, and then there is self-publishing – unrefereed, unedited, ...

### **What advice would you offer to indexers just starting out?**

As American humorist and mathematician Tom Lehrer said: 'Be prepared! That's the Boy Scout's marching song ...' Indexers just starting out should be prepared to work under time pressures and not have the leisure to give the project the index it deserves. Having a good collection of reference books is very useful, although Google can be used instead. Be prepared also to make mistakes – you learn from experience – but be as meticulous and thoughtful as possible so as to avoid them. And enjoy the challenge indexing provides you with. I have read quite a few interesting books that I would not otherwise have read.

### **If you could dine with a famous historical figure, who would it be?**

On 18 May 1922, at the Majestic Hotel in Paris, there was a dinner party given by Sydney Schiff. I would love to have attended that party. Among others invited were two of my favorite novelists, James Joyce and Marcel Proust – this was their only meeting – as well as Pablo Picasso, Serge Diaghilev and Igor Stravinsky. Fortunately, I can be there in spirit, through Richard Davenport-Hines's *A Night at the Majestic: Proust and the Great Modernist Dinner Party of 1922*, which I have just started to read.

I'm looking forward to finding out what went on and what was said.

Of historical/political figures, one I would like to have had dinner with is Genghis Qan. I met him when I indexed Igor de Rachewiltz's two volume annotated translation of the 13th century Secret History of the Mongols. A difficult and complicated job, but such a good story and an interesting man, though his mother was really more impressive. On second thought, having dinner with her would probably be more interesting, though I'm not sure about the food and drink (fermented mare's milk, kumis or airag).

Other famous historical figures are pretty much the same as Genghis Qan. But I'm not a one for dinners and such, except with family and a few very close friends. They are the real makers of history as far as I'm concerned.

### **If you were a letter of the alphabet, which letter would you be and why?**

I would be the letter Q. It turns up so rarely and is never alone (except in foreign transcriptions), always comes with 'u'. It makes me think of quiet, quaint, quirky, quality, quandary, quatrains (of Rumi or Omar Khayyam), quest and question.

*The photo shows Barry with his dog Lilith*

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## **A letter from Glenda Browne**

Dear Editor,

Your reprinting of my review of Pam Peters' book *The Cambridge Guide to English Usage* in the December 2011 issue was a timely reminder about this excellent work.

It is seven years since I reviewed this book, and it is one of my favourite books ever. I consult it fairly often – usually to respond to a query or settle an argument. Just yesterday I looked up 'anymore' to see whether it could or should be written as one word. The book, in agreement with the youngest member of our family, suggested that use of the one word form 'anymore' for the adverbial meaning (i.e. any longer) was useful to distinguish it from 'any more', as in 'any more apples'. Anymore is set solid more often in the US than in the UK, where it may be used informally.

Whenever I consult the guide it provides a useful answer with background data and explanations to make the recommendations clear.

I was prompted to write this letter partly to reinforce my final comments in the review, but also because parts of my review were quite nit-picky, and may have disguised the very positive feelings I have about the book. I highly recommend it for all word-lovers.

*Glenda  
(the Editor, who has hung onto his much-used review copy since 2004, agrees with every word!)*

## ANZSI and Branch events

| Date and time                                     | Organiser                   | Name of activity  | Venue                                     | Contact details  |
|---|-----------------------------|---|---|--|
| Sat 24 March<br>9.00 am                           | NZ<br>Branch                | Web Indexing course<br>(with Glenda Browne)                               | Wellington                                | Details at:<br>< <a href="http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=240">www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=240</a> >                |
| Sun 25 March                                      | NZ<br>Branch                | Forum: Trends in<br>indexing (with Glenda)                                | Wellington                                | Details at:<br>< <a href="http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=241">www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=241</a> >                |
| Tues 27 March<br>9.00 am                          | Vic Branch                  | Basic Indexing Part 1   | Holmesglen                                | Details at:<br>< <a href="http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=243">www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=243</a> >                |
| Wed 28 March<br>9.00 am                           | Vic Branch                  | Basic Indexing Part 2   | Holmesglen                                | Details at:<br>< <a href="http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=244">www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=244</a> >                |
| Wed 4 April<br>6.00 pm VIC<br>then<br>7.15 pm AGM | ANZSI<br>with<br>Vic Branch | The VIC: 'Do ebooks<br>need indexes?'<br>followed by<br>the adjourned AGM | Holy Trinity Anglican<br>Church Hall, Kew | See page 2 and details at:<br>< <a href="http://www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=238">www.anzsi.org/site/calendar_details.asp?id=238</a> > |

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### ANZSI Newsletter

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### Newsletter schedule

The next Newsletter will appear in April 2012.  
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The editor welcomes your contributions submitted by  
email to <[peter.judge@bigpond.com](mailto:peter.judge@bigpond.com)>



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