SECOND MEETING FOR 1985
WEDNESDAY, 29 MAY 1985
FULL DETAILS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE
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AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS Postal Address: G.P.O. Box 1251L
Melbourne, Victoria 3001

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A WRITER'S VIEW OF INDEXING

In the following paper, Susan Priestley discusses indexing from the perspective of the author. Her paper is based on a talk she presented at the AusSI seminar, 'Indexing: issues facing today's indexer', held in Melbourne on November 1984.

From the outset, I warn you that this will be a highly personalised account of indexing, with a quite self-indulgent and narrow perspective. However, I trust that you as professional indexers will be able to suitably weigh the relevance of what I have to say when applied to other areas of writing with which you are familiar.

I began writing in the mid-sixties. The first two books were local histories of Echuca and Warracknabeal. They were published in 1965 and 1967 by Jacaranda Press just before and just after it was taken over by larger publishing concerns.

The third book was a local history of the Mulgrave Shire, later renamed Waverley. It did not appear until 1979 and, during the intervening twelve years, the publishing business had drastically altered its shape. For this book, the choice of John Ferguson of Sydney as the publisher was in fact incidental to the selection of Brown, Prior and Anderson as printers. Anderson was a staunch citizen of Waverley and their printing works were just across the border in Burwood. Anderson, at our request for full publishing facilities, sought out Frank Eyre, who was then an independent freelance editor following his years with Oxford University Press. Anderson and Eyre, I gather, together sought out John Ferguson.

Four years later, in 1983, the history of the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) was published by Macmillan and The Victorians, one volume of which was my work, has been published very recently. In this case, the publishers were a newly-formed joint venture of Fairfax, Syme and Weldon, which is composed of the newspaper firms of David Syme & Co. and John Fairfax & Sons and a modern 'with-it' book-marketing entrepreneur, Kevin Weldon.

As you will recognize, my books have brought me into brief associations with a widely varying range of publishers. But I should point out that all the work I have done so far has been as a writer commissioned to produce a manuscript. As such I have had only a minor influence on the publishing contract, which has been made between the publishing firm and the commissioning body — that is, the local councils, the RACV and, in the case of The Victorians, our management committee acting as the agents for the Victorian Government. However, in all cases except one, working contact between the publishers and myself during the actual production of the book has been quite close.

As a writer of histories, which are mostly local in character, I have shared with all the publishers the firm conviction that indexes are an essential component of the published product. For the successful marketing of the book, particularly in the area to which it refers, publishers well recognise the value of recording in the index family and place names,
if nothing else. The prospective buyer flicking through the book is reputedly influenced firstly by its visual appearance, especially the illustrations, and secondly by the recognition of familiar names in the index.

That said, I'll survey the various indexes that have appeared in my books.

The two histories published in the 1960s have, from the writer's point of view, quite reasonable indexes. As far as I am aware they were produced by members of the editorial staff of Jacaranda Press, or perhaps contracted out by them. But since I was not a party to the publishing contract, I am not aware of how payment was made for the indexing, if indeed that was a separate charge from the general publishing fee.

I am confident however that the decision to have a good index was made by Jacaranda's Chief Editor in 1964, Gwyn James. He had not only had a distinguished career as a publisher, but was himself an historian of some note, being the editor of Alfred Joyce's letters, A Homestead History, and later Old Warracknabeal, a collection of late nineteenth-century photographs. Incidentally, he also edited my Echuca manuscript, often as I sat across the desk from him, and I owe him a great debt for instructing me in some of the finer points of good writing. He was and remains an enthusiast for the finest standards of book production and Australian publishing suffered a great loss when he retired from the industry.

I have diverted into this tribute to Gwyn because I am sure that it was his influence which ensured the presence of an index to Echuca in the first place, and a good quality one at that. Although he had already resigned from Jacaranda when the time came for publishing Warracknabeal, something of his influence remained with the editorial staff. My contact with them was more distant than with Echuca but the resultant product, including index, was of good quality.

With the Waverley history, Frank Eyre's editing and participation in choosing illustrations and overseeing the general book design was both meticulous and imaginative. I was therefore a little surprised when he called one day to say the page proofs were ready. Could I have them checked in about four days' time, and could I prepare the index as I was going through? As I knew the manuscript fairly well, it would probably be fairly easy, wouldn't it? My initial startled reaction subsided a little and, yes, I supposed it would be fairly easy. When I had fully recovered I thought 'Good. I can put in all the subject references for which I search in other published material when I am doing my own research'.

And here I might divert into the obverse side of my experience with indexes. As a convicted and convinced user of published material, I always look for indexes after scanning a book's chapter and section headings and the contents list. When an index does not exist, I am exasperated. Where it does exist, but does not include the category or subject in which I am interested, I am irritated, probably beyond reason. These faulty indexes - or faulty as far as I am concerned - are often those which concentrate heavily, if not entirely, on place and personal names. In order to sniff out the subject matter I am after, I must then think up a possible person or place association and look up all the references under them. When this means time-consuming skim-reading, sometimes of the major part of the book, my frustration rises. The frustration on bad days can become quite fiery. You may never have realised when looking across a library full of industrious readers that there is such a boiling mass of
passion barely contained under the surface. On the one hand, the Great Australian Novel may yet have its origins there. Alternatively, you as indexers could campaign for higher and wider standards of indexing and improve the general mental health of the nation.

To return to the Waverley index. I set about it with the best will in the world and found it quite difficult and confusing. However, as it was inconceivable that there should be no index to the history, I waded through setting it out on a series of small cards. From these, the printers set straight into type, including all my typographical inconsistencies - mixtures of upper and lower cases, funny indentations, the lot. When I got the proofs back, it was again a rush job, and I did as many corrections as came immediately in sight, but plenty remained uncorrected. Moreover, I failed to check that all the cards had actually been typeset. So some of the entries simply do not appear including, to my embarrassment, the names of some notable citizens and also Monash University. These were grave slights to many potential buyers.

Users of the Waverley history have included growing numbers of school students studying their local area. Recently local librarians became so frustrated with my index that they began preparing a much fuller one which is now completed and is available for consultation at all branches of the Camberwell/Waverley Library.

With the RACV history, I had virtually no contact with Macmillan after handing over the manuscript. I did see the galley proofs but not the page proofs since I found to my astonishment that it is not Macmillan's policy to have authors see page proofs. Therefore I had nothing to do with choosing or captioning illustrations, with the general editing or with the index. I say this to you because some appalling blunders occur in several areas of the book including the misplacement of one paragraph of the text. Never again shall I pass by the opportunity to have as close a connection with the publishing process as I can. And this now includes an interest in the index - even if I have to pay for it.

For The Victorians, we were warned by the publishers that the preparation of the index was our responsibility, in addition to general editing of the text. This is, I think, somewhat unusual in publishing circles - at least as far as the general editing is concerned. But since the publishers were willing to produce a quality product at a very low price so that it would be available to as many people as possible, the management committee manipulated the budget to accommodate these costs.

At the same time, all of us thought it essential to have a good index. Through your Society we made good contacts who were able to produce the required full indexes in quite tight time schedules. I was therefore delighted when John Hirst, who reviewed my book in The Age, thought that it was too densely packed with information for reading right through (unless you were Barry Jones) but that most people would find ready access to parts that interested them through the excellent index. And that, of course, was prepared by your current President, Jean Hagger.

It's a compliment I would personally like indexers to take to heart. More and more people are finding your work of great value and I wish you well in extending your profession and raising its standards.
The Australian Society of Indexers was established in 1976, after the winding-up of the Society of Indexers in Australia, an organisation which owed its existence to the dedication of the late Godfrey Green. There were 47 foundation members of AusSI, of whom twenty-seven are still members. Present membership is 135, with members in the various states as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Members</th>
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<tr>
<td>A.C.T.</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.S.W.</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.A.</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tas.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qld</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vic.</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are three members in New Zealand. As would be expected from the distribution of the membership, most of the Society's activities take place in Victoria. However, efforts are being made to bring together members in places other than Melbourne; due mainly to the efforts of Alan Walker, a group has begun to meet in Sydney.

The Newsletter has continued to serve as the main means of keeping the wide-flung membership in touch with both the Society's activities and with recent developments in indexing. Four issues appeared in 1984 and the Society is indebted to John Thawley for his services as Editor.

The quarterly meetings in 1984 covered a range of topics of concern to indexers. Pam Trier spoke about the work of the Standing Committee for the Book Trade; Jeremy Fisher described his experiences as the indexer of The Australian encyclopedia; and Jennifer Goddard told of the activities of the Information Management and Consulting Association. As its fourth meeting for the year, the Society conducted a one-day workshop, with the theme 'Issues facing today's indexers'. This was well attended, participants coming from not only Victoria but also A.C.T., N.S.W. and Queensland. Organization of the workshop was undertaken by Sue Harvey and Stephen Lansdown and the Society is grateful to them, and to the interesting panel of speakers, for the presentation of what was undoubtedly a useful and pleasant event for members.

A short course in indexing was offered in June/July 1984 but there was not sufficient response to warrant its being conducted. A more promising response has been made to a course proposed for February/March 1985.

The program of registration of indexers has developed a notable momentum during 1984. There are now twenty-four Registered Indexers, making it much easier for the Society to meet requests from publishers and authors for information about suitable indexers for specific commissions.

The Society is constantly aware of the need to raise the status of indexers and indexing. Much attention has been given by the Committee to the matter of taking a stand on a reasonable fee for indexing and the November Newsletter contained a statement which should be of assistance to all indexers. A submission was made to the International Standards Organisation for consideration in the preparation of its Draft Standard on Indexing.

To enhance further the image of indexing and indexers, the Society decided to offer an annual award for an outstanding index. The first Australian Society of Indexers Medal will be awarded during 1985.
Without a doubt, the Society does seem to be making its presence felt in those areas where it should be making a relevant contribution. With more active participation in its programs by its members, it should continue to grow in importance and, more especially, in interest to all associated with indexing.

JEAN HAGGER

*************

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mrs. L. Andel
Ms. S.L. Barley
Mrs. D. Baxevanidis
Ms. L. Beaumont
Ms. K. Borchardt
Ms. L. Farkas
Ms. S. Hingston
Mrs. I. Mentha
Mr. M. Nightingale
Mrs. K. Rogers
Miss S.Ross
Mr. K. Siebel

33 Minerva Avenue
North Balwyn, Vic. 3104
259 The Boulevard
Port Melbourne, Vic. 3207
5 Gertrude Street
Preston, Vic. 3072
1/26 Aikman Crescent
Chadstone, Vic. 3168
16 Clontarf Crescent
Templestowe, Vic. 3106
Datascape Information Pty. Ltd.
P.O. Box 1870
Canberra, A.C.T. 2601
C/- North Melbourne Library
66 Errol Street
North Melbourne, Vic. 3051
22 Wandsworth Road
Surrey Hills, Vic. 3127
Delhi Petroleum Library
G.P.O. Box 2364,
Adelaide, S.A. 5001
Night Owl Publishers
P.O. Box 764
Shepparton, Vic. 3630
4/587 Glenferrie Road
Hawthorn, Vic. 3122
2/1683 Pacific Highway
Wahroonga, N.S.W. 2076
## AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

### STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

**JANUARY – DECEMBER 1984**

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<td>RESI interest</td>
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**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS**

### BALANCE SHEET

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<td>Cash in Bank on 1 January 1984</td>
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<td>On Call with RESI</td>
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<td>Fixed term deposit RESI</td>
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<td>Plus Income</td>
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<td>Less Expenditure</td>
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<td>Assets as at 31 December 1984</td>
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### ASSETS

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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS' MEMBERSHIP - FEBRUARY 1985

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

Australian Government Publishing Service, G.P.O. Box 84, Canberra, 2601
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Mr. L. Farkas, Datascape Information Pty. Ltd., G.P.O. Box 1870, Canberra 2601
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Mr. D. Kingsmill, C/- Aust. Embassy Amman. Dept.of Foreign Affairs, Canberra 2600
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Ms. L. Leader, 37 North Street, Angaston, 5353
Ms. C. Walker, 30 Pirie Street, Kent Town, 5067
Mr. E. Zalums, 1/29 Grosvenor Street, Glandore, 5037

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Mr. D. Mercer, P.O. Box 132, Sandy Bay, 7005
Mrs. T.E. Sharpe, 330 Carella Street, Howrah, 7018
Mrs. E.G. Whitten, 38 Flinders Esplanade, Taroona, 7006

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Ms. K. Borchardt, 16 Clontarf Crescent, Templestowe, 3106
Mrs. D.J. Bridges, 10 Talofa Avenue, East Brighton, 3187
Miss A. Burgin, 274 Douglas Parade, Williamstown, 3015
Mrs. J. Challis, 111 Riversdale Road, Hawthorn, 3122
Chief Librarian, CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 3022
Ms. A. Chuah, 2/98 MacIntosh Street, Shepparton, 3630
Mrs. W. Collins, C/- 568 Upper Heidelberg Road, Heidelberg, 3084
Mrs. B.H. Colville, 27 Boronia Road, Vermont, 3133
Ms. G. Cresp, 1 Lantana Court, Frankston, 3199
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Mr. P.H. Dawe, 42 View Street, Mont Albert, 3127
Mrs. R. Doig, 112 Wimbledon Avenue, Mt. Eliza, 3930
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Ms. J. Einhorn, 1/28 Lynedoch Avenue, East St. Kilda, 3183
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Ms. P. Forster, 240 Walsh Street, South Yarra, 3141
Mr. C. Garrow, Manager, Information Services, CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne, 3002
Mrs. E.J. Golding, 645 Canterbury Road, Vermont, 3133
Mrs. V. Goldsworthy, 23 Falconer Street, Glen Waverley, 3150
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Ms. S. Harvey, 28 Wellington Avenue, Blackburn, 3130
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Mrs. F. Hua, 27 Sackville Street, Kew, 3101
Mr. F. Hutchinson, P.O. Box 218, Carlton South, 3053
Ms. M. Impey, 49 Morell Street, Mornington, 3931
Mrs. N. Kennedy, 3 Pentland Street, Ascot Vale, 3032
Mr. K. Kimstra, 199 Ryan's Road, Eltham North, 3095
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Mrs. J. Horn, Central Librarian, Australian Society of Accountants, 170 Queen Street, Melbourne, 3000
Mrs. H.C. Landers, 9 Moor Street, Fitzroy, 3065
Mr. S.A. Lansdown, P.O. Box 26, Black Rock, 3193
Miss R. Lenan, 5/1 Howard Court, Clayton, 3168
Mrs. R. Levenson, 60 Robert Street, Bentleigh, 3204
Mr. G.R.T. Levick, C.I.L.E.S., CSIRO, 314 Albert Street, East Melbourne 3002
Librarian, City of Footscray, 70 Buckley Street, Footscray, 3011
Mrs. S. Leipa, 5 Wellwood Square, Wheelers Hill, 3150
Mrs. M. Long, 3 Wills Street, Kew, 3101
Miss P.R. Longley, Serials Librarian, Bercardt Library, La Trobe University, Bundoora, 3083
Miss J. McGovern, 3/30 Foote Street, Elwood, 3184
Ms. J. McGrath, 6 Hardy Terrace, East Ivanhoe, 3079
Ms. S. McNair, 18 Francis Street, West Heidelberg, 3081
Ms. L. Marsi, 160 Faraday Street, Carlton, 3054
Mr. J.S. Martindale, Oakleigh Public Library, 148 Drummond Street Oakleigh, 3166
Mrs. I. Mentha, 22 Wandsworth Road, Surrey Hills, 3127
Mrs. B. Miller, 7 Inglis Road, Berwick, 3806
Mrs. W. Miles, 45 Edwards Avenue, Port Melbourne, 3207
Miss K. O'Connor, 15/43 Haines Street, North Melbourne, 3051
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Miss C. Paltridge, 678 Canning Street, North Carlton, 3054
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BOOK REVIEWS - INDEXES MENTIONED


'The work has an excellent index, with entries generated (as is only appropriate) by the use of PRECIS.'


'A full index completes a useful research tool.'


'Like others in the series, it is marred by lack of an index.'


'The arrangement of the material alphabetically by the women's names will not produce answers to the questions most likely to be asked, for example a request for information about the author of "Nearer my God to Thee"... The easiest way to find the answer to this question is to identify the author by consulting the "Index of first lines" in Hymns ancient and modern, then using this information to locate the biography in the work under review, a rather inefficient procedure.

It is to be hoped that there will be sufficient interest in this work to warrant undertaking a revised and expanded edition ... may it be complete with its own "Index to first lines".'


'The index, from an examination of the Australian chapter, cannot be faulted.'


'She also provides an impeccable index and a most informative list of contents.'


'...dictionaries of quotations are useful primarily for identifying the half-remembered snatches of verse and prose that lie in everybody's mind.

It is hard to devise a fair test for this, but with the help of bibulous friends I prepared a short list of verse items to check. Using the "Key Word Index", there was no problem with "'We'll all be rooned', said Hanrahan", "the cicada's torture-point of song", "Grass is across the
wheel-tracks now". M'Dougall topped the score alright when I found that the eponymous hero was listed alphabetically under MD, and "the colt from Old Regret" was lassoed with regret, though there was no reference under colt...

There was no trouble with the "second-hand Europeans" who "pullulate/ Timidly on the edge of alien shores", except that I looked first for "Europeans" under "Ideas and References" rather than "Key Words": this was simply a mistake, but it leaves me unclear about the virtues of having the two references separate. Looking at the excerpts from The Sentimental Bloke I find the wanted line, "'Put in the boot!' I sez. 'Put in the boot!'", but this is not to be found under "boot" in the "Key Words Index".

It adds up, perhaps, to a spotty performance - but one, I think, as good as could reasonably be hoped for; and better, in fact, than I expected.'


'Some improvement in the subject indexing might have been achieved by the use of "see" references or by indexing libraries under more terms. For example, searching "physics" in the subject index does not lead the user to the library of the Department of Science and Technology Antarctic Division which is indexed under "cosmic ray physics" and "upper atmosphere physics" and nor does searching under "atmospheric research". The library name index should prove useful.'


'There are composer, lyricist and performer indexes, and a revealing first line index. Who would know for example that a song beginning "A bop bop a loom op a lop bop boom" would be entitled Tutti Frutti? And are there really so many songs which begin "Doo doo"?'


'There is a vast amount of information encompassed in this work, and it is a pity that an index was not provided, despite the further time delay and extra cost that would have been involved. Its provision would most certainly have enhanced the value of these collected papers.'


'The index brings together listings of recipes by principal ingredient and by name.'


'There is also a glossary of trade terms but (and this is a considerable disadvantage) no index.'

'There is a very full subject and author index, although some variation in the depth of its coverage can be detected - names in parentheses, for example, seem to have been excluded from the index. A note to that effect ought to appear somewhere.'


'There are two indexes, an organisation and titles index and a subject index. Both appear to be reasonably reliable.'


'The index is perfunctory. Karl Marx is quoted several times on the aboriginal inhabitants of Scotland (not the Aborigines of Australia as it may seem from the back cover) and discussed among the references, but his name is not indexed. Nor are many other individuals who appear briefly and who are bound to be of more interest in their local history context than has been assumed by the index. Most perceptibly, there is a collective entry for the Kurnai tribes, but none of any of the five different groups who make up the Kurnai and who are discussed separately and at length at various places in the text.'


'Users would be well advised to pay particular attention to the introduction to this work, especially if they have not had a good look at its indexing for an edition or two. A KWIC approach has been used, with one general index, rather than a multiplicity of specific indexes. This works satisfactorily and efficiently if you become familiar with how it works, and does not seem to high a price to pay for rapid production.'

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AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS MEDAL

In 1985 the Australian Society of Indexers will offer, for the first time, an award for an outstanding index to a book or periodical compiled and first published in Australia. The award will be called the Australian Society of Indexers Medal.

To be eligible for the award, the index must be in print and must have been first published in Australia between 1 January 1983 and 31 December 1984. It must have been compiled in Australia even though the text to which it refers may have originated outside Australia.

Indexers, librarians, authors, publishers, indeed all who are concerned with indexed publications are invited to recommend indexes as contenders for the 1985 award. Recommendations with essential bibliographical details should be sent to the Secretary, Australian Society of Indexers, G.P.O. Box 1251L Melbourne, Victoria 3001, by 30 April 1985.

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The Society of Indexers' 1985 Weekend Conference, 'Indexing now', will be held at Hatfield College, Durham, from 5 to 7 July 1985. Speakers will include George Ottley (railway bibliography) Peter Mann (people's reading habits) and Diana Dunn (Victorian children's literature).

Peter Grieg has revised his paper 'So you want to index?'. The new version appears in the Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada's Bulletin, vol. 7, no. 2, December 1984. It covers learning to index, opportunities for employment, professional ethics, charging for indexing and includes a bibliography. Also in this issue is 'International miscellany on indexing' which includes details of the periodicals issued by the Society of Indexers, the Australian Society of Indexers and the American Society of Indexers.

This extract from an item in Australian bookseller and publisher, vol.64, no. 944, November 1984, should be of interest to indexers, in the light of the comment made by one of our members in the last issue of the Newsletter:

The Society of Editors has received advice from Parkhill, Lithgow and Gibson, chartered accountants, on the matter of withheld tax from payments to freelance editors. The Society sought the advice following a Taxation Office instruction to publishers to withhold tax from freelancers. According to the advice, freelance editors are 'professional persons' under terms of the Act and as such are exempt from PAYE provisions (p. 20)

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CORRECTION

Details of the book reviewed by S. Harvey in this Newsletter, vol. 8, no. 4, November 1984, p.51, are as follows:

Who is who in classification and indexing. Edited by I. Dahlberg. Frankfurt/Main, Indeks Verlag, 1983.

Part of the description was inadvertently omitted from the review.

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BOOK FOR SALE

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