The next meeting is the Annual General Meeting to be held Wednesday 12 February, 1986. Details will be forwarded in January, together with nomination forms for Office Bearers for 1986.
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INDEXING THE ARGUS NEWSPAPER

The following paper is based on a talk presented by John Hirst and Frances O'Neill at the Society's November meeting. The paper is largely based on Frances O'Neill's notes.

The Argus was published from 1846 to 1957 and has been partially indexed. The years 1846 to 1858 were indexed by the late Jack Feely, Chief Librarian of the Melbourne Public Library, as the State Library was then known. The results of his work were published by the Library Council after his death. At the other end of the Argus publication period, the Argus office itself issued an index for the years 1909 to 1949. The Argus project is intended to fill the gap between these two publications, that is, from 1859 to 1909.

Background
I was appointed earlier this year as the indexer to co-ordinate and edit the work done by the volunteers who actually read the newspapers. They select items to be indexed according to guidelines devised by John Hirst and prepare summaries on 3 x 5 inch cards. My task then is to

- ensure that the summaries conform to the guidelines
- assign suitable subject headings
- formulate the style of the index.

Equipment
To assist me in this, I am using an Ericsson personal computer with a memory of 256 bytes, together with a newspaper indexing program devised for the project by Stephen Lansdown, a member of AusSI. I cannot yet comment on the program as it has only just been delivered.

To date, I have been using the computer as a word processor, feeding in entries in date order as they come up. When I am using the program, these will be sorted into alphabetical order automatically and I will be able to see how the index is taking shape.

Summaries of items
The translation of the summaries into index entries has been made easier by the high quality of the work done by the volunteers. They are meticulous in their approach to the work and the entries so far have been very accurate in the spot checks I have made. There will, of course, be errors of transcription; these are inevitable in a project of this size.

There are occasionally some enigmatic summaries, which I am at a loss to know what to do with. One summary, for instance, described a letter to the editor on 'Decency'. On investigation, this proved to be a letter from an outraged theatregoer who had observed 'a person of immoral appearance' in the dress circle of the Theatre Royal. The respectable ladies present were obliged to avert their eyes from the spectacle, and the writer was anxious to inform the theatre management of the episode. A frivolous example, perhaps, but it points to a serious problem: There is a minority of items which are difficult to describe adequately in a few lines on a summary card; and it is easier for me to go back to the newspaper itself than to struggle with a mysterious and possibly inadequate summary.
The summaries can sometimes be models of clarity but their subject matter is so intriguing that I am tempted to go back to the newspaper to find out more. For instance, how was it ascertained that the bush fire at Woodstock was caused by a cow, treading on a box of matches left on the grass? How was it that William Millard of Collingwood thought of inventing a lightweight hat? Reading these curious items is one of the incidental pleasures of the work on the index.

Headings for personal names

A high proportion of entries in the index will be personal names and, in this respect, the index will be of value to the family historian as well as the academic.

The two existing indexes do not provide sufficient personal name entries. The Argus office index in particular has very few direct personal name entries, and this can be very frustrating. For example, a reference to Mary Grant Bruce is buried in the entry

WOMEN - arrivals and departures in 1912.

If the user searches only under her name, nothing will be found.

A greater emphasis on personal names raises its own problems. Will this result in long and useless lists of references to undifferentiated John Smiths? I have recently experienced the frustration of chasing up a certain Robert Jamieson who settled in Western Port in 1838. Along the way, I've been pursuing, without meaning to, another Robert Jamieson - also an early settler, also an 1838 arrival - who keeps getting in my way. Robert Jamieson doesn't sound a particularly common name, but the coincidence of time and place was enough to confuse things.

I have decided to provide a description in parentheses beside each name, if information about the person's occupation or place of residence is provided in the newspaper article. This should help the user to find the particular person wanted. For example

Deering, John (waiter)
Downman, Henry George (bank manager, Taradale)

One category of personal names, the pseudonym, is slightly controversial. It can be argued that a large proportion of these will never be identified and entries for them serve no useful purpose. But there are cases where a pseudonym may be extremely interesting. For instance, the future biographer of Sir William a'Beckett, Chief Justice of Victoria, would know that a'Beckett used the family name 'Malwyn' as a thin disguise to write articles in the newspaper. If I turn up a letter to the Argus by 'Malwyn', it would be a pity to disregard it. Similar cases may exist: though the identity behind a particular pseudonym may be unknown in 1985, it may well be discovered in the future.

Headings for place names

Place names present a particular problem in an historical index. Names of places have changed over the last 150 years, boundaries have changed, towns have flourished and disappeared into oblivion. Sandhurst has become Bendigo, Boroondena has split into Kew, Hawthorn and Camberwell. What should be done with these? It is not a simple matter of a few 'see'-references, directing the user from Sandhurst to Bendigo, because boundary changes can complicate the matter enormously. Even to provide 'see'-references from an old name to
a more recent one can involve considerable research, which I have no time to do. It seems appropriate to enter place names as they are used in the Argus, and to leave the user to find out the changes of name which have taken place in the area in which she or he is interested. To do otherwise may be to falsify the material being indexed.

Subject headings

The choice of subject headings for the index will, of course, dictate the style of the finished product, and one must keep in mind the audience for which it is intended.

It is not to be solely a scholarly work, though I hope it will meet the highest scholarly standards. It is intended for the general public, from school students to individuals researching their area of interest, from blacksmithing to steam engines.

It will also be used by scholars, not so much as a substitute for archival records as an adjunct to other research. For instance, a scholar working on divorce in the 1860s will wish to go to the complete court records in the PRO, but may use the Argus index to follow up peripheral leads - for biographical information on the judges who heard the cases perhaps, or to see if there was any public reaction in the form of editorial comment or letters to the editor, to a particular case.

The subject headings therefore must be clear and easily accessible to a wide range of users. The index to the Times, in spite of its superb coverage and high standards, may be somewhat forbidding to the general reader in its movement from a very general heading such as

EDUCATION

through a hierarchy of more specific terms, to the specific item:

EDUCATION - examinations - 0 levels
EDUCATION - examinations - cheating.

Where possible, specific entry is preferable, but we must also cater for the needs of those who need scattered items brought together.

Entries for general subjects, as distinct from personal names or place names, need a controlled vocabulary or thesaurus. At present my aim is to use as sources for subject headings

- Library of Congress subject headings
- John McKinley's FLASH: list of Australian subject headings
- APAIS thesaurus
- common usage.

LCSH, with all its faults and difficulties and its American bias, is a safeguard for the individual indexer in that it can be used to find alternative forms of heading and to bring to one's attention the broader and narrower subjects relevant to the item being indexed.

FLASH, which is compatible with LCSH, has some useful subject headings, although some necessary ones, such as LARRIKINS, have been omitted. For some reason, it includes PASTORALISTS and SQUATTERS but not SELECTORS.

APAIS thesaurus is a list of subject terms used in the Australian Public Affairs Information Services put out by the National Library of Australia.
Common usage has to justify all my departures from such authorities as LCSH. Our hypothetical user will have to be the rationale behind selecting a particular heading. As in book indexing, it is up to the judgement of the indexer to decide whether the reader of the book, or the user of the Argus index will be better served by one term or another.

Style
To decide on a suitable format for the index, the first step was to look at the existing published volumes and, in fact, I did a trial run, keeping very closely to the Feely style and choice of headings.

It would seem obvious that it is desirable to keep as much as possible to the conventions used in the two existing indexes. But, they are very different, and I can't reconcile the differences.

Feely's basic arrangement was heavily influenced by library practices: it is an alphabetical sequence with some personal name entries but many more subject ones such as

GOLD
ROADS AND BRIDGES
WHEAT

His place names are insufficiently subdivided in some cases. Although 'Melbourne' has many subdivisions, 'Geelong' does not. These are perhaps the major drawbacks to the Feely index - its lack of personal names, and its overloading of certain subject headings so that the hasty or rushed user does not benefit from the meticulous work Feely put in.

It is, however, much closer to the needs of the general reader than the Argus office index. This relies heavily on the general and, as I have indicated, it is difficult to find the particular item you want. Its style is partly dictated by the units in which it was published: what was feasible to encompass in a half-yearly issue is very different from methods necessary to cope with a longer period of time. One of the reasons this index is so hard to use is the fact that it is quarterly. You have to plough through so many alphabetical sequences to find one minute item.

Its terms such as

VICTORIA - exports

are more suitable for an index attempting to cover world events as well as local ones. Therefore, they are not so suitable for us, as we are concentrating on Victoria only.

My conclusion is that I cannot produce an index which will follow the practices of both the existing Argus indexes. Since we are stuck with the middle years, we have, I think, to make our own decisions. It would be desirable for a user to be able to take a particular term and to be able to go straight through the indexes from 1846 to 1949, but this is not often going to be possible. For example, WHEAT is still WHEAT, but other terms have changed. Feely chooses the specific term but the Argus index goes for the very broad terms.

An inevitable difficulty comes from the fact that our language is constantly changing, and an indexer has to think of the audience. A heading used by Feely, for example, ORPHAN ASYLUMS, was appropriate and still immediately recognisable 40 years ago. Someone today who wants to look at the question of child welfare will find it through Feely's 'see'-reference. Should we then keep the term used in the 1860s or try to trim the number of entries by moving the references to a CHILD WELFARE entry.
There are terms which are no longer in common use but which nevertheless need to be retained in the index because they do precisely describe some historical phenomenon. For example, the word 'temperance', of course had its moral significance - the virtue of temperance - but it is unlikely that many people would use it today. It narrowed in meaning so that it was associated with the use/non-use of alcohol. Today, a researcher interested in 19th century drinking habits would certainly know about the temperance movement, so the term has not lost its relevance. However, the general population would be more likely to expect to find alcohol and alcoholism discussed as health, not moral, problems. The index would have to reflect this shift in public thinking. So I wouldn't propose getting rid of Feely's heading TEMPERANCE, but would have to add at least a 'see'-reference from ALCOHOL.

And as I think about the ways in which we have to modify the work of Feely and other indexers, I am well aware that future generations will inevitably find some of my headings inadequate or mysterious, so quickly is our language changing.

* * * * * * *

INDEXING IN 'HOW TO WRITE A BOOK' BOOKS

There is a growing number of books on how to be an author. As new titles arrive I have been checking them for their sections on indexing. The following form a fairly typical sample.

The writing business by Liz Taylor, Severn House, London, 1985, is a bad example of an incompetently written D.I.Y. book. It tells us that 'Authors can pay someone to index their books but this is expensive and the money can be saved by doing it yourself'.

Apart from these words there are four other paragraphs which purport to be a brief course in indexing and tell us that 'the most tedious stage of the operation' is the sorting which is achieved 'by spreading the cards out on the floor and crawling around among them'.

There is no suggestion here or in the 'further reading' list that, at least, the author should study a book on indexing. The index to this book itself demonstrates the author's ignorance of the subject. The index is one page long, has no entries for subjects such as literary style, usage, bibliographies, footnotes, proofreading, bookkeeping, and most of the other concerns of aspiring freelance authors, but there is a plaintive entry under 'Rejection, coping with'. In this case a rejection may have offended but it would have been the wisest course for the publisher. Perhaps we should set our English colleagues on to the author before she leads others astray.

Ian Linton, in Writing for a living Kogan Page, London, 1985, confines himself to identifying indexing as a 'specialist' service, and to giving a plug for the Society of Indexers as the contact which can see the author right. Otherwise this book is a model of clarify with a good bibliography and index.

Guide for Authors, Blackwell, Oxford, 1985, is a booklet of 64 pages with two aims - to give in a small space what an author needs to know to find a publisher and prepare his work so as to be acceptable, and to document
Blackwell's preferred styles and procedures for authors under contract to the firm. Since Blackwell is one of a number of long-established publishers which has created the standards for the best English publishing, all of the advice is sound and most of it is generally applicable. The section on indexing begins with the statement that 'the author is often his or her best indexer'. While we might challenge this as a general proposition, the expert help which Blackwell can give their authors justifies it. The rest of the section gives a clear exposition of principles of book indexing with examples which will keep the author on the right track.

The Guide urges the author to 'think carefully about the structure of the index well in advance' and to study Book Indexing by M.D. Anderson which, it seems, Blackwell uses as a textbook.

Writing a family history by Dom Meadley, Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies, Melbourne, 1985. Indexing has interest for family historians beyond their interest in the production of indexes as such, since indexing skills are involved in the organisation of the large number of small pieces of information with which the genealogist or family historian works.

This book picks up at the point where the research has been done and the material is to be written up and published. A book on authorship in this field is justified by the number of particular problems which family history presents over most other forms of writing. In identifying the problems, Mr Meadley distinguishes between those principles which the author neglects at his peril and those aspects of the work which may be subject to individual taste. There are checklists for the author to use in assessing his work, one of which begins with the good advice, 'Read this booklet from cover to cover before you start, in order to give you an idea as to where you are heading'.

The chapter on indexing shows the same orderly approach. The suggested process begins with a consciousness-raising exercise using existing indexes, followed by a study of the indexing standard, BS 3700:1976 (1983) Preparation of indexes to books, periodicals and other standards. There is a summary of the main principles used in family history indexes, particularly personal names, with examples, the use of computers and acknowledgement of AusSI as the professional body. Mr Meadley's acknowledgement of the help of AusSI members in writing his book demonstrates the close and fruitful relationship which exists between our two fields of endeavour.

JOHN SIMKIN

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REVIEW


This publication is the outcome of a project undertaken by the ACER, commissioned by the Australian Education Council, in recognition of the wide use in Australia of various (and unco-ordinated) modifications of the Thesaurus of ERIC Descriptors produced in the United States by the Educational Resources Information Centre. In order to provide a vocabulary based on the actual needs of Australian users, a thorough reassessment of the ERIC Thesaurus was undertaken, subjected to specialist review, and tested in use.
Former users of the ERIC system will nonetheless find themselves in familiar territory, for reasons more fundamental than the similar typeface and layout. Broadly, one can distinguish two different, though not entirely exclusive, approaches to vocabulary development: a hierarchic-analytic method, and a method emphasising 'literary warrant'. On the first approach, individual terms are conceptually derived by analysis of the scope of the next higher (more general) hierarchical level; each is thus implicitly defined by its position in the hierarchy. On the second, individual terms are derived directly from the subject texts; any hierarchy is imposed essentially as an arrangement of convenience, and is quite secondary to the explicit scope of the individual items. The present work, if anything even more so than its ERIC predecessor, uncompromisingly adopts the literary-warrant approach. There is, indeed, no hierarchical listing provided; terms are displayed (albeit with their Broad, Narrow and Related Terms) only in alphabetical sequence; and the assignment of Scope Notes is so liberal as to give the main display almost the appearance of a Glossary.

The particular virtue of this method is, of course, that a user familiar with the subject materials will often find concepts expressed precisely in the anticipated format. A danger is that the pragmatic approach to hierarchical arrangement can lead to Broad Terms, in particular, being derived in a merely verbal manner - and yet having the status of useable terms. Such descriptors as 'Problems' are the result of this process; they are, no doubt, intended as devices for collating more meaningful terms ('Administrative problems', 'Reading difficulties'), but being listed as descriptors they will inevitably be used, resulting in unhelpful index entries.

Certain other noticeable oddities also seem to result from an emphasis on the verbal (as distinct from conceptual) interpretation of indexing terms. For instance, there is no term for 'Indexers', who are presumably to be denoted by their function ('Indexing') or their product ('Indexes'). Whatever we may think of this, I cannot imagine that disabled persons would be pleased to encounter the congruent instruction that they be described as 'Disabilities'.

It is possible, also, to find some anomalies in the distribution of Scope Notes. To give just one example, I would not have thought that 'Television' required a 20-word explanation, when terms with inherent ambiguities ('Australian literature'), or with technical difficulties for all but specialist users ('Suprasegmentals') are presented without support.

But I do not wish to dwell on occasional flaws. Regardless of its derivation and its title, this vocabulary will have appeal much wider than in the field of education. The vocabulary of the social sciences is not well documented, and those of us who only occasionally need to stray from the natural sciences will have at least equal cause to welcome this guide as its specialist users. In addition to Descriptor Groups related to educational processes and practices, there is coverage of mental and physical health and development, human geography, sociology and politics, information and communications. Even the Groups related to functional areas such as research and measurement have a sociological perspective that occupies an important niche amongst the guides available in the natural sciences.

The production of this Thesaurus is a considerable achievement, and a significant service to information handling in Australia.

G.R.T. LEVICK

* * * * * *
The Society would be interested in hearing of the experiences of members concerning the taxing of freelance indexing work.

Following a recent ruling by the Commissioner of Taxation, it appears that indexers may be exempt from the Prescribed Payments Scheme. The situation is a fairly complex one but, as I see it, if editors who are not in a master and servant relationship with their employers are exempt from the Scheme, indexers should be exempted as well.

I recently submitted a more detailed argument along these lines to CSIRO administrators. A meeting was subsequently held between members of the CSIRO and the Australian Taxation Office - I was not invited - at which it was decided that indexers were employed for their labour as opposed to their intellectual skills!

It seems to me that this is a purely arbitrary decision and that it is insulting to the indexing profession. I fail to see why we should be treated in the same way as builders' labourers and subcontractors who are endeavouring to cheat the system.

Do you have any experiences in this area? Do you have strong views on the subject? Should AusSI do anything about the situation? Please let us have your views on the matter.

SUE HARVEY

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BOOK REVIEWS - INDEXES MENTIONED

AUSTRALIAN Wool Corporation. Crochet book. Greenhouse Publications. Reviewed by S. M. Stewart, Australian book review no. 75, October 1985. 'However, the addition of a stitch or pattern index would have made this book much more useful - for instance the pattern on page 61 advises finishing the garment with "crab st." but so far the search for this stitch in the book has been fruitless'.

HICKIE, David. The Prince and the Premier. Angus & Robertson. Reviewed by Mervyn Rutherford, Australian book review no. 72, July 1985. 'This book is good value even if you only read the index'.

MC GOLDRICK, Prue. Yallourn was... Gippsland Printers. Reviewed by S. M. Stewart, Australian book review no. 76, November 1985. 'Illustrated well, and indexed, many memories will be stimulated by this book'.

MAYNE, Robert (comp.) The great Australian wine book. Reed Books. Reviewed by Alan Forsyth, Australian book review no. 76, November 1985. 'A glossary of wine terms - so you too can use the right words - and a good index - to quickly reach the page to prove your point - are included.'
PAYNTING, Harold & GRANT, Malcolm (eds). Victoria illustrated. The James Flood Charity Trust. Reviewed by Neil Clerehan, The Age, 7 September 1985. 'The book, with its lack of index ('It's not written for the lazy reader' laughingly quipped the editor) and the apparent haphazard arrangement of subjects, kept reminding me of my first "Coles Book Arcade Annual". It's all here again: the frightening interiors, the engravings of machines. Only the puzzles are missing.'


SCHMIDT, Janine Betty & POSTON-ANDERSON, Barbara. Australian picture books: a select annotated bibliography 1978-83. Kuring-gai CAE, School of Library Studies. Reviewed by Vane Lindesay, Australian book review no. 75, October 1985. 'The back matter will be enormously useful for researchers, parents, librarians, kindergarten supervisors, schools and other sources of information and instruction: for listed in this section are a Thesaurus descriptor index, a subject index, children's picture book award winners, design award winners and a bibliography.'

SOWDEN, William J. The Northern Territory as it is. History of the University Planning Authority. Reviewed by S. M. Stewart, Australian book review no. 76, November 1985. 'A brief modern index has been added, but a comprehensive one would open the book to many who would like to peruse specific details or nineteenth century attitudes.'


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NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mrs J. Wilson 1/9 Veronica Street
Ferntree Gully, Vic. 3156

Mrs M. Meadley 15 Cyprus Avenue
Nunawading, Vic. 3131

Mrs B. Parsons 11 Bayview Parade
Hamlyn Heights, Geelong, Vic. 3215

Mrs M. Stevens 7 Swift Drive
Glen Waverley, Vic. 3150
READ ANY GOOD BOOK REVIEWS LATELY?

We are looking for contributions to the 'Book reviews - indexes mentioned' section of the Newsletter. If you come across any items suitable for inclusion, please send the details to the Editor, Australian Society of Indexers, G.P.O. Box 1251L, Melbourne Vic. 3001.

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NOTES AND NEWS

The British Standards Institution has revised one of its standards related to indexing:

BS 1749 : 1985 Recommendations for alphabetical arrangement and the filing order of numbers and symbols.

The standard is available from state offices of the Standards Association of Australia.

The editor of the Indexer has written to AusSI apologizing for the mistake in the binding of the title page and index of vol. 14, no. 4, October 1985.

The Australian author vol. 17, no. 3, September 1985, includes 'Writers and income tax' by Ken Methold. The article reports the results of a survey of the overall tax situation of members of the Australian Society of Authors.
We welcome contributions to the Newsletter. If you have any material you feel would be suitable for inclusion, please send it to the Editor, Australian Society of Indexers, G.P.O. Box 1251L, Melbourne, Vic. 3001, by Monday 27 January 1986.

INDEXING SOFTWARE

INDEX4 is a software package designed by and for professional book and periodical indexers, and has been under continuous refinement since 1977.

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