

Australian Society of Indexers

NEWSLETTER

Volume 15 Numbers 10 & 11 November—December 1991

ISSN 0314-3767

This issue combines both November and December. As we have been publishing late in the month, this was seen as a better alternative to releasing an issue that would collide with Christmas mail and mayhem, and which might have been left unread by holidaying indexers.

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS MEDAL: 1991 AWARD

Awarded to:

Geraldine Suter, for
Index to The Argus 1860. Melbourne:
Council of the State Library Of
Victoria, 1990. xi, 250pp.

Highly commended:

Dorothy Prescott, for index to
*Geology of the Mineral Deposits of
Australia and Papua New Guinea*.
Edited by F.E. Hughes. Parkville,
Victoria:
Australasian Institute of Mining and
Metallurgy, 1990. 2 volumes. 'Subject
Index'
(40pp.) printed in both volumes.

Elmar Zalums, for index to
*Gipps — La Trobe Correspondence
1839-1846*. Edited by A.G.L. Shaw.
Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University
Press at the Miegunyah Press, 1989.
Index pp. 401-415.

JUDGES REPORT

The judges' final decision came down to a question of ranking three high quality indexes. Our task was complicated by diversity. This was not only in respect of subject matter varying from the scientific to the historical, not only from the difference between providing

access to a relatively narrowly defined field of knowledge to provision for virtually the whole gamut of concerns of everyday life, not only a matter of varying size (from 14 pages to 40 to 250) — though all of these aspects had to be taken into consideration. Our task was particularly problematic because entries submitted were of two distinct types: indexes to monographs and to serials. We would like to suggest that for future awards, some consideration be given to setting up separate categories.

Because the shortlist comprised two book indexes (one a work of reference, the other a scholarly edition of correspondence between two historical figures) and one newspaper index (to a year's issue of a daily paper), it was not possible to make a choice simply by direct comparison on a set of criteria. Therefore a prime consideration had to be how well each index would perform in meeting the challenge presented to lead its users directly to relevant parts of the text. It has to be said that the magnitude and complexity of the challenges varied, and this had also to be part of our assessment.

After discussion and deliberation, the judges decided to commend highly, for the competent professionalism demonstrated, Dorothy Prescott's detailed, systematic, comprehensive index to the minerals and locations of deposits in Australia and Papua New Guinea — work calling for a high degree of mastery of specialised subject matter. Also highly commended is Elmar Zalum's index to the letters between New South Wales Governor, George Gipps and Port Phillip Superintendent, Charles Joseph La Trobe. This is yet another example of the high quality work produced by this indexer in recent years.

The 1991 Medal is awarded to Geraldine Suter for her index to the Melbourne Argus for the year 1860, the first product of the State Library of Victoria indexing project sponsored initially by the History and Heritage Committee of Victoria's 150th Anniversary Board from 1983, with the support of the Australian Research Grants Scheme from 1986, and aiming at eventually filling the index gap 1860 to 1909 to this major Australian metropolitan daily — a mammoth task. In awarding the medal to Geraldine for her

excellent work, the judges note that the contributions of numbers of other people in the planning and execution of this first index were a vital part of the happy outcome.

The 250-page index is simply and pleasingly presented, with clear guidelines for its use. Considering the complexity and enormous volume of the material to be indexed, a carefully thought out indexing approach was required. This has been achieved in an admirable manner, with some novel strategies such as the mix of chronological and alphabetical sub-arrangement of entries under main headings. The controlled vocabulary that had to be developed for the indexing task appears to be appropriate for the likely research-oriented user group. The network of *see* and *see also* references reflects a thorough and painstaking concern to cater for a wide range of user approaches.

Only time and the extension of the time span indexed will tell if the solutions arrived at are the best, or need modification. Indeed, the prospect of applying the developing technologies of CD-Rom and other means of electronic storage and access may have a bearing on future directions of indexes produced for the project. For the present, an impressive start has been made.

Geraldine's index is, by the way, good for laughs — under Accidents, for instance, 'glass globe falls on man in Legislative Assembly', a reference to an item on page 5, column b of the issue for March 1860. More importantly, it opens windows onto hidden worlds. Through its Actors, Theatre and associated cross-references, it reveals the cultural richness of early Melbourne. Through its entries under vanished gold-rush towns like Lamplough and Steiglitz, it lays out a lost past. Through entries under Telegraph one may trace the impact of technological change; through entries under Temperance one may examine the early stirrings of strenuous attempts for social change. And much, much more...

The judges warmly congratulate Geraldine Suter and all who worked with her, and extend our very best wishes for the future of the project.

Elizabeth Morrison
George Levick
Cheryl Schauder

MEDAL DINNER 'NOISY'

Some 24 people attended the 1991 Australian Society of Indexers Medal Dinner which was held at Graduate House, University of Melbourne on Wednesday, 23 October.

The evening was superb — excellent food and wine was served and everybody attending obviously enjoyed themselves.

I was sitting next to Geraldine Suter (Medal winner) and she decided to pop outside for a cigarette. When she came back in she said the noise (which could be heard from outside) was unbelievable. This 'noise' continued right throughout the evening so there were certainly no complaints!

The speechifying (is there such a word?) was kept to a minimum. Elizabeth Morrison presented the official Medal report [above] congratulating Geraldine Suter for her outstanding *Index to The Argus 1860*. Elizabeth also commended two other indexes, one from Elmar Zalums (a previous medal winner) and another from Dorothy Prescott. The report was followed by a few (very few!) words of wisdom from the Society President, who then made the official Medal presentation. Geraldine then responded, thanking in particular John Hirst, co-ordinator of the Argus Project and the many volunteers who helped to put the whole project together.

After Geraldine's speech a presentation was made to Diane Riley, who accepted the certificate honouring the publishing house on behalf of the Council of the State Library of Victoria. Diane pointed out that winning the Medal would go a long way in helping the Argus Project to continue.

The evening ended with some coffee and port, plus a lot more 'noise'. It was, in all, a most enjoyable night.

Max McMaster
National President

EDITORIAL

Apology

I must begin with an apology regarding the October 'expanded' issue. Regretfully, there were a number of errors and omissions. In particular, the Annual Report of the NSW Branch, by Garry Cousins and the review of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia*, by Kingsley Siebel, required corrections—these appear on page 3.

Unfortunately, production of the October issue coincided with my exams, the looming of an interstate trip, and a blockage in the nose. In the midst of it all, the Mac seemed more user-foe than friend and the proofreading suffered while I tussled with an apparent gremlin in the 'page footer' window. The evil spirit TYPOS laughed all the way to the Xerox Copy Centre. Sorry everyone.

It has been a good year for the Australian Society of Indexers. There have

been some interesting meetings and training courses held in both Melbourne and Sydney; the Annual General Meeting of the NSW Branch, marking its first full year of operation; the first ever meeting of Queensland Indexers (to our knowledge); and the award of the AusSI Medal (no award was presented the previous year).

Given the enthusiasm and ideas that are being generated by the committees of both the National/Victorian and the New South Wales Branches, and the interest and communicativeness displayed by the membership, it is to be expected that 1992 holds more good things in store for us.

Max McMaster will be stepping down as National (Victorian) President. He deserves a rest after two years of good work, although he has shown every appearance of rather enjoying himself and will probably continue to contribute in another role. Presidential aspirants note — a roaming band of AusSI talent scouts are on their way with a one-size-fits-all glass slipper.

We are also losing National (Victorian) committee member, Rosemary Cotter. Rosemary will be missed, and deserves praise for her efforts and involvement in committee work. Interested members who are able to attend (not too frequent) meetings in Melbourne may consider nominating to take her place. Nomination forms are enclosed with this issue and members may nominate for any position.

There will be no further issues of the Newsletter until February 1992 (don't forget to renew your membership/subscription!). I would therefore like to wish all AusSI members a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Helen Kinniburgh

Report of the COMMITTEE ON INDEXERS' TRAINING NEEDS

The committee which was established in December last year at the Information Exchange on Training for Indexers has now submitted its report to the National Executive for consideration. The committee's brief was to work out the best way in which to conduct a survey of training needs of publishers and prospective indexers. The committee comprised Connie Wilson (University of NSW), Allen Hall (University of Technology, Sydney) and Garry Cousins (President, NSW Branch).

The report went through four drafts and in its final form consists largely of two questionnaires: one for publishers, to ascertain what, if anything, they want from a training course for indexers, and, one for prospective and practising indexers, to ascertain what they want from a training course.

The report also includes a number of suggestions as to how the questionnaires might best be used.

**Garry Cousins
NSW President**

[Should any member wish to see a copy of the above report for comment, please telephone Max McMaster (03) 4187453 or Ian Odgers (03) 4187275.]

CORRECTIONS (OCTOBER ISSUE)

In the Annual Report of the NSW Branch of the Society on page 1, the names of three NSW committee members were omitted. These were: Alan Walker, Christine Winning and Christine MacKinnon.

In Kingsley Siebel's review of the *Cambridge Encyclopedia* on pages 4-5, the three numbered footnotes were omitted. These were as follows:

1. David Crystal is presently Hon. Professor of the University of Wales, Bangor, and it was announced at the meeting that he is to be the next President of the Society of Indexers when Ken Bakewell steps down in Feb. 1992.

2. The reprint offers another "first". The publisher sets up an inter-relationship between user and editor by calling for comment, and the work is to be offered on a disk as the data base is open to a word search.

3. See the colour plates I and II immediately following p. 1334 for shots returned from space.

HOLIDAY COMPETITION

A book without an index is like...?
Best answers published next year,
winner gets free 1992 membership.
Send answers to the Editor, AusSI, PO
Box 1251L, Melbourne, Victoria 3001.
(See Fabian Hutchinson on page 7 for
inspiration).

NATIONAL/VICTORIAN ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: FEB 1992

The AGM and dinner will be held at the same delightful venue — the Spring Park Tea Rooms, 3 Spring Road Malvern, at the same cost of \$25.00 (covering three-course dinner and all drinks). We will be starting a little earlier this time — 6.30 for 7.00pm on Wednesday, 26 February 1992.

The short 'business' part of the evening will involve election of office bearers for 1992, and the presentation of the Annual Report and Financial Statement for 1991.

All members and friends are welcome to attend. A notice/booking form will be enclosed with the next year's first issue (early February). A form for the nomination of office bearers is enclosed with this issue.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS 1992

Please return the enclosed form to renew your membership of AusSI, subscription to the Newsletter and (optional) subscription to The Indexer. Renewals are due on 1 January 1992.

Members will note the new fee structure. Due to the cost of producing and posting 11 issues of the Newsletter, an increase has been necessary. However, we have also introduced a discount 'distant member' rate, for non-Melbourne/Sydney indexers, who are less able to participate in Society activities.

*New rates: Melb/Sydney: \$30
Distant: \$25
Indexer sub: \$22*

NSW MEETING PLACE NEEDED

The New South Wales Branch requires a suitable venue for meetings. Until now, the Branch has met in the State Library of New South Wales. The central location was certainly convenient, however, the cost of hiring the room is probably no longer feasible.

The National/Victorian Branch of the Society has had time to build a network of members who are able to contribute various resources, including access to meeting venues.

As a new Branch, the NSW chapter of the Society needs members to come forth with a viable solution. Any potential venue would need to be *reasonably* central, i.e. inner suburban.

If you can help, please contact the President of the NSW Branch, Garry Cousins on (02) 955 1525.

SOCIETY OF INDEXERS (UK) CONFERENCE

The Society of Indexers (UK) will be holding their 1992 conference from 17-19 July, at Chester College, Cheyney Road, Chester. Booking forms were enclosed with the last issue of *The Indexer*. Should there be any non-subscribers to the above journal who are interested in attending, please contact the Secretary, Ian Odgers, on (03) 418 7275.

MEMBERS FORUM

[Members are welcome to write to this column with queries or problems on any aspect of indexing]

Law indexing

I have been trying to obtain a copy of *A practical guide to law indexing* by Reg Hewitt and Con Banwell (Butterworths, 1977). Does anyone know of the whereabouts of a copy of this or any other books or articles on law indexing?

If so, please telephone me at (07) 3913686 (w) or (07) 2094527 (h).

Thankyou,

Mary Anne Secker (Qld)

OXFORD REFERENCE BOOKS

I had used Howard Collins' *Authors' and printers' dictionary* (10th ed. revised 1969) for many years. He was an etymologist and 'compiled' his work (in 1905) on 'separate slips' which he 'arranged alphabetically' and 'eliminated duplicates'. He selected words, personal and place names which had 'tricky

spellings' (don't we have a plethora of words in the English language which also have tricky accent, pronunciation and hyphenation—he tackled a large number of these words); included frequently used foreign words and phrases which had lingering difficulties and explained them; listed the correct form and style of abbreviations to many English and foreign words; cleared the use of capitals for words which should be expressed in lower case; elucidated a number of technical terms; guided the reader on the use of hyphens, and explained the use of a large number of acronyms which we meet in the printery, the office and the study. This was the first investigation of its kind, and he records that there was then no authority (not even the OED) on the use of some words which were a 'constant source of trouble'.

Early in 1991, I inquired from OUP whether there had been a more recent edition of Collins' book and was advised that The Oxford Writers' Dictionary (OWD) by RE Allen was published in 1990, so I purchased it and found that it had "reproduced with some revisions¹ the text of the highly successful" Howard Collins.

When I read George Levick's informative review² of the Australian Writers' and Editors' Guide (AWEG) I called Oxford and was told that the AWEG was a "companion volume" to the OWD, so I bought this as well. On examination of my new purchase I was amazed to find that the publisher had (unadvisedly³ perhaps) used a misleading description of AWEG as it was certainly not a 'companion' but clearly an Australian adaptation of OWD. In setting out the conventions for the use of each book the OWD claims to be a dictionary whilst the AWEG describes itself as a 'type of' dictionary—otherwise the preliminary pages are identical, as are the abbreviations in each, except for localised usage. My further comments will show that the differences are limited mainly to personal and place names.

I set about comparison before deciding which book I should keep. For this purpose I compared the first 200 headwords in each book under A and M (the middle letter of the alphabet) and the whole of Y and Z.

I found, by and large, that the Australian edition of (AWEG) omitted many of the peculiarly English, Scottish, French and US personal or place names and substituted or added peculiarly Australian names of persons and places. A number of English acronyms which are somewhat foreign to us were also omitted and some Australian acronyms referring mostly to institutions were included instead. Almost all foreign words and phrases

which have become part of the English Language were retained, as were the 'tricky' words, abbreviations, technical terms etc. etc. There was no doubt that each record in the OWD was examined by AWEG because in my limited comparison I found three in which there was a difference of emphasis.⁴

Under A, the OWD used '**aboriginal** (adj.)...aborigin/es (pl.) also with init. cap in Australia'. The AWEG used '**Aborigin/e**, -al, indigenous inhabitant of Australia, (adj.) -al (pl.) -es. See also Koori, Nyoongah. The cross-references explained that **Koori** was the name used for 'Aboriginal people in SE Australia, and that **Nyoongah** was how 'WA Aborigines' referred to themselves.

Strangely, under M, I noted that '**Mac Gregor**, family name for Rob Roy' in OWD was omitted by AWEG, but as if to make up for this the latter included '**Magellanic cloud**', patch of stars in southern heavens, named after F. Magellan, Port. navigator', which was obviously not visible in England! OWD included '**Macquarie University**, Sydney', but AWEG demonstrated convincingly that this headword referred in Australia to a Scottish-born governor, his wife, a harbour, an island, a lake, a town and a university. '**McMurdo Sound**, Antarctica' was another inclusion in AWEG which deserved (but was omitted) from OWD.

To set out the limited number of differences under Y and Z will be tiresome for the reader of this contribution, but both included the commonly used expressions 'you'd' and 'you'll' (with a note that it is 'to be printed close up') but failed to say that they were colloquial abbreviations for 'you would' and 'you will' respectively, as they did for 'I'll' which stood for 'I shall or I will'. In summary the two books must be expected to diverge (as they have done) in respect of proper names, place names and acronyms which are relevant to the respective English and Australian scenes, but names alone are not the essence of a work of this kind, whether it is called a 'Dictionary' or a 'Guide'. Among the more important records of the work in respect of words and phrases, foreign expressions, abbreviations etc., there was very great duplication, so my compelling advice (in addition to the more detailed reasons contained in Mr Levick's review of AWEG) is that the latter, rather than the OWD may be added to an Australian indexer's reference library. In comparing the two AWEG scores often; it uses a slightly smaller but more easily readable type face (which reduces the 448-page OWD to 384 pps.) and whiter paper which makes it still

more clear. I intend to return my copy of OWD.

1. Philip Bradley in his comments on OUP Reference books (*The Indexer* 17(3) April 1991 210) says 'actually the revisions are slight and not easy to detect'.

2. AusSI Newsletter 15(6) July 1991.

3. See the cross-reference from 'inadvisable' to 'unadvisable' in OWD and AWEG. Neither includes the tricky words 'inadvisedly' or 'unadvisedly', as does the Macquarie Dictionary, the first being 'inexpedient' and the latter being 'rash or indiscreet'.

4. (OWD) 'erythism, use ery-' (AWEG) 'erethism (path.) excitement, not ery-'. The latter form was used in Collins' 10 ed. and is obviously to be preferred. The other two which I noticed don't need the minor differences to be set out.

Kingsley Siebel
NSW Correspondent

MORE RISKS AND HAZARDS...

I take my hat off to Kingsley Siebel for being prepared to share with us his errors and hazards (vol. 15 no. 8) along with his methods of dealing with them. It occurs to me that lessons learnt by mistakes and risks would be many with so many of us working in isolation, and with indexing one is learning all the time.

Some time ago I was asked to produce an index for the second edition of a work and was advised by the author it would be a simple matter of changing page numbers and adding a few more headings for new material.

Not so! Not so! I was so dissatisfied with many of the previous headings as I attempted to use them for the new material, I found myself re-indexing a good many of them. After all I did not want the previous level of indexing to be considered my standard. Also, this author had remixed sections to such an extent that the major part of my time was spent hunting for where the section was in another chapter. I should have looked more carefully at the material before accepting the job on his terms.

The whole process, I suspect, could have been done much more easily and certainly with a more satisfying end-product by re-indexing the entire work.

A difficulty is of course proving to the author/publisher that what appears to be a quick and automatic process is not. But then, negotiation is also one of an indexer's skills, is it not?

Mary Anne Secker
QLD Correspondent

NEWS FROM THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

[Unfortunately, the first two of these 'NT Updates' went astray in the mail, however, our correspondent kindly supplied a second copy and it was thought to be worth letting members know what has been going on with indexing way up north, even if we're a little out of date.]

* Michael Loos, the North Australian Collection Librarian (at State Reference Library, Darwin), is directing indexing projects that will help conserve some heavily-used historical materials: a collection of "scrap-books" and "cutting-books" now being card-indexed by Cathy DeLaRue, (a retired senior librarian). Another card-index project, covering memoirs by popular authors on NT subjects (Bill Harney and Douglas Lockwood) will supply topographical and biographical approaches to these descriptive works also in heavy demand, but lacking original (back-of-book) indexes.

* A major publisher of works on Aboriginal issues and language materials, the Institute for Aboriginal Development, is located in Alice Springs. Among its historical works, *We are staying: the Alyawarre struggle for land at Lake Nash*, by Pamela Lyon and Michael Parsons (publ. for the Central Land Council, 1989), 239pp., contains a detailed index made by Pam Lyon, with entries for terms that have particular significance apart from 'ordinary language' meanings (entries for "business", "business country" and "business places"); the Index is also a virtual who's who of land rights in the NT and further afield, and includes multiple references for such key entries as "excisions" and "living areas" that are central to Aboriginal concerns. Also there are cross-references from terms such as "grass rat" and "green snake" to the appropriate local terms. And anyone wanting to come to terms with "gidgee" will be led back to a richly descriptive text.

* An Indexing Workshop was held as part of the 1991 National Geosciences Conference in Adelaide in July, attended by your correspondent, as well as Territory and other State Mines Dept. and mining company librarians. Introduced by Des Tellis, the workshop provided an opportunity to look closely at the computerised indexing developed by the AMF, BMR [Bureau of Mineral Resources] and some State departments, with some 'hands-on' indexing of a range of

document types (company reports, theses, maps, and so on) as well. But if only we could afford GeoPac, Min-Met, etc.!

* No prizes dept. ALIA's *InCite* asked for completions of the phrase "A book without an index is like..." Professional indexers would not be lost for words here. All I could manage was "...a mouse without a menu." But for the non-computer types, perhaps "...a desert highway in a dust-storm" might've been more devastating. Or... "A book without an index is like an Aboriginal people without the land to move in."

Fabian Hutchinson NT Correspondent

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Ms T Baker
PO Box 67
GORDON VIC 3345

Mrs A Irons
43 Fortuna Avenue
NORTH BALWYN VIC 3104

Mr B McHugh
4/49 The Avenue
WINDSOR VIC 3181

Mr S Sunter
42 Hodgson Street
LOWER TEMPLESTOWE VIC 3107

Ms J Lawrence
65 Collingwood Street
Palmerston North
New Zealand

Mrs Hillman
2 Manuka Drive
Warrnambool VIC 3280

Dr G Marnell
PO Box 619
Elsternwick VIC 3185

THANKYOU TO CORRESPONDENTS

1991 was the first year that the AusSI Newsletter tried recruiting 'correspondents' from each State. With the introduction of a more frequent Newsletter, it is just as well we

got a response—because we couldn't have done it as well without them. Perhaps readers would like to know a little bit about our correspondents.

New South Wales: **Kingsley Siebel** has a background as a barrister and now runs a publishing business, Serendip Publications, specialising in law and business. He has written us a number of articles on indexing, and has now become Minutes Secretary for the NSW Branch.

Queensland: **Mary Anne Secker** and **Jean Dartnall** are both librarians. They organised a meeting of Queensland indexers this year, and have sent contributions to the Newsletter.

Jean Dartnall has been assisting with the indexing/thesaurus component of the Queensland University of Technology's Bachelor of Business (Information Management) course, and expresses the view that it is good to see modern information managers 'i.e. computer people' learning about information *content*. Mary Anne Secker has worked in academic, public and special libraries, in addition to cataloguing objects in a science museum and now managing an audio cassette library for blind and visually impaired people throughout Qld. She says 'indexing is a balance to the administrative demands of my other job for I am able to concentrate on it — without interruptions!'

Northern Territory: **Fabian Hutchinson** has sent contributions to the Newsletter, and is a Librarian for the Central Land Council in Alice Springs. It is certainly encouraging to have made contact with indexers as far afield as Fabian.

New Zealand: Speaking of 'far afield' **Simon Cauchi** has also sent contributions to the Newsletter. He lives in Wellington and is a freelance indexer and retired librarian. Simon has given talks on indexing to in-house editors, and has made available to us some useful notes from these talks. We hope to bring them to readers next year.

Thankyou again, correspondents, for your enthusiasm and help.

As for the States that are unrepresented, i.e. South Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and Western Australia— who knows! Perhaps next year will see the emergence of more correspondents.

DEADLINE: FEBRUARY ISSUE

Contributions should reach the Editor at the address on the following page by 21 January, 1991. Contributions on 3.5" Mac disk will be appreciated.

**AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF
INDEXERS (National/Victorian)**

**GPO BOX 1251L,
MELBOURNE, VICTORIA 3001**

**President: Max McMaster
Phone: 03) 418 7453**

**Secretary: Ian Odgers
Phone: 03) 418 7275**

**Editor: Helen Kinniburgh
Phone: 03) 418 7320**

**NEW SOUTH WALES
BRANCH:**

**PO BOX R598,
ROYAL EXCHANGE, SYDNEY,
NSW 2001**

**President: Garry Cousins
Phone: 02) 955 1525**

**Secretary: Christine Winning
Phone: 02) 793 0793**

**Assistant
Secretary: Alan Walker
Phone: 02) 380 5875**