



Australian Society of Indexers NEWSLETTER

Volume 16, Number 7, August 1992

ISSN 0314-3767

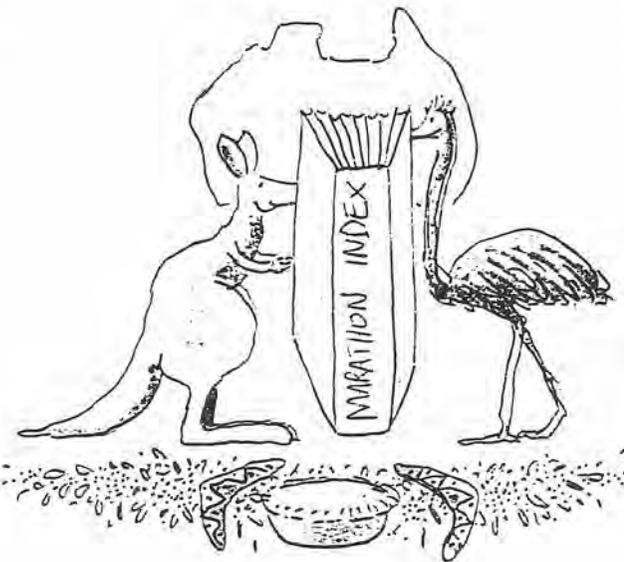
EDITORIAL

Now that the Olympic Games are over we can get back to some serious indexing. Does the IOC publish an "Olympic book of records" with indexes to title-holders, medallists, cities, times and dates? Or is the whole lot computer-searchable with a sophisticated relational database index plus free text retrieval?

Our feature article this month concerns the MARATHON efforts which have gone into indexing one of Australia's most informative early newspapers, *The Argus*.

Happy reading!

Steve Sunter



NSW Meeting: Recent Developments in Indexing

Do you file *Mc* and *Mac* as they are spelt, or do you inter-file them as if spelt "Mac"? Should prepositions be ignored in filing? Should you abbreviate sequences of page numbers or print them in full (e.g. 127-8; 127-28 or 127-128)? These and many other practical points of indexing will be discussed at the forthcoming general meeting of our NSW Branch. The theme of the meeting will be current trends in indexing practice.

Garry Cousins will lead a discussion based partly on Hans Wellisch's new book, *Indexing from A to Z*. Garry will be comparing some of the tenets espoused in Wellisch's book with the older, but well-tested book by G. Norman Knight, *Indexing, The Art of*.

Kingsley Siebel has returned recently from Britain, and will be reporting on the papers he heard delivered at the Society of Indexers' conference in Chester.

This will be an AGM meeting; the third Annual General Meeting of the NSW Branch. All members wishing to keep abreast of current indexing practice are sure to find it a worthwhile evening.

Venue: Seminar Room 2,
State Library of NSW;
Date: Wednesday, 16 September
Time: 6:00 for 6:30pm.
Cost: \$5.

Editors of Australia ... Unite!

There has been a great deal of discussion amongst the state societies of editors about the formation of a national body. It has been widely tipped that a separate body will be formed, rather than just a strengthening of ties by formation of a Federation of state societies.

Our society enjoys good relations with the editors' societies and we hope that will continue in the future. At the last committee meeting of our Victorian branch it was decided to grant reciprocal rights to reduced fees at all training courses to members of the Society of Editors (Vic).

Indexing *The Argus*: Background & Report on Vic meeting

The early newspapers

The Argus newspaper was published in Melbourne from 1846 to 1957. It was a highly respected newspaper of historical record. By the 1950's it seemed dull to some *Age* readers (while *Age* readers were looked upon as "radical" by loyal *Argus* readers). No newspaper index was published during the first 64 years of its operations. However, it was innovative in that it published its own index from 1910 to 1949¹.

"Feely" index

Mr John Feely, who for the last five years of his life was Chief Librarian of the State Library of Victoria, recognised the immense potential to researchers of the earlier volumes of *The Argus* and set about indexing them. He is remembered by librarianship students of the time as a witty, lovable and unpunctual lecturer. However, he was working "long hours and late into the night" on the index.

Feely's index was heavily used in typescript form until it was later

published in 1976 by the Library Council of Victoria². The 1976 publication covered the first nine years of the newspaper's operations, i.e. 1846-54. Indexes to the years 1855-56, 1857, 1858, and 1859 (Jan-April) existed only in typescript form until cumulated and reproduced in microfiche format in 1988.

Feely's introductions to these volumes are in his characteristic informative and entertaining style. His subject headings are well-phrased examples of the indexers' art.

Victoria's birthday project

The idea that some of the funding for Victoria's 150th Anniversary (1984-85) might go to an indexing project had come from our Society, which asked Dianne Reilly, the La Trobe Librarian, for a suggestion. She immediately thought of bridging the "Feely gap" (i.e. 1860-1909). The "gap" had always been keenly felt by staff of the La Trobe Library, of whom two, John Arnold and Alannah Kelly, were made members of the management committee for the index. John Hirst, of La Trobe University's History Department, was made coordinator of the project.

The History and Heritage Committee for Victoria's 150th anniversary celebrations agreed to fund the indexing project for an initial twelve month period (1984-85). The Australian Research Council then gave funding from 1986 to 1991, and the Potter Foundation continued funding from 1991 to 1992. Indexing is planned to continue with volumes right up to 1909 if funds are available.

Initially, Frances O'Neill worked as the indexer on the project for 18 months. She was later replaced by Geraldine Suter. Geraldine was well advanced with subsequent volumes when she was awarded the Australian Society of Indexers Medal in 1991, for her work as Indexer of the 1860 volume. She acknowledges the indispensable work of the volunteers, some of whom continue to give as many as three days a

week to this work. This sentiment is also echoed by John Hirst in his introduction to the 1860 volume. The volunteers are now working on newspaper issues well into the 1870's.

Indexing the newspapers

In her talk to members of the Society in July, Geraldine told us enough of the complexities of her index to make us hope that she will write about it in detail later. Many of the problems and their solutions would be as relevant to contemporary as to historical indexing.

Newspaper indexing needs well thought-out decisions on scope, emphasis, form of entries, subject headings, and the form of names; names of people, places, structures, businesses and other corporate bodies. Depth of indexing has to be considered in relation to the uses to which the index is expected to be put.

The *Feely* and the *Argus* indexes are incompatible in many respects and all the above decisions had to be made independently. Some of the differences are of emphasis: Victorian concerns being included more by Mr Feely than by the *Argus* indexers. Personal names were usually included only where they referred to politicians (e.g. Menzies, Mr R.G.) or Church leaders (Mannix, Archbishop).

Changing language ... changing places

Indexers of serial publications well know that terminology changes over time, as do social perceptions, e.g. "fallen women" and "lunatic asylums" are not currently sought terms, and references must be made to them when they are used, from less pejorative phrases such as "social welfare". Place names and boundaries have changed and changed again; building names need to be in a consistent form (Geraldine puts the place name in front, e.g. "Geelong Football Club" and "Geelong Hospital"). Personal names are sometimes shared: the "John Brown" sentenced to flogging needs to be

distinguished from the "John Brown" who was a judge.

Putting it all together

Continuation to 1909 of the present indexing project will give the newspaper an index covering 1846 to 1949. This will be a much longer period than for any Australian newspapers currently being published. Nothing else that has been done or is being done can compare. Availability will also be wider, with the possibility of additional formats. On-line full text publication of newspapers preserves and disseminates their content but searching terms in a structured index is far more efficient than free text searching.

It is the hard decisions which earn indexers their medals and also help future indexers. Perhaps this series of indexes may guide indexers for a current Australian newspaper index, if one is ever created in the future.

Jennifer Pritchard

Notes

1. *Argus and Australasian (1910-1949) Index to the Argus*. Melbourne: Wilson and Mackinnon Printers.
2. Feely, J. A. (1976) *Index to the Argus, 1846-1854*. Melbourne: Library Council of Victoria.
3. Suter, Geraldine (1990) *Index to the Argus, 1860*. Melbourne: Council of the State Library of Victoria.

US Conference 1993

The American Society of Indexers is celebrating its 25th year. Conference theme is: *Indexing, providing access to information: looking back, looking ahead*. Mark your calendars! May 20-23, 1993 at the Old Colony Inn, Alexandria, Virginia (i.e. a hop, skip & jump from Washington, DC).

Conference coordinator is Nancy Mulvaney (510) 524 4195 or write to: PO Box 386, Port Aransas, TX 78373.

Out & About

Max McMaster has accepted an invitation to speak to students in the Graduate Scientific and Technical Writing course at Rusden College on August 31. The lecture topic is: "What to consider when doing an index".

Talking Books

Last issue we noted a couple of indexers on the move in Queensland. We incorrectly reported that the Talking Book Library in Brisbane is closing down. It is, in fact, still talking and open for business.

LETTERS

Staying in touch

I really enjoy reading, the new-look newsletter, it's fun! And I can also keep tabs on my old mates in Sydney.

I'm working in politics here in the *Heart of the Centre* (Centre of the Heart?), not as an indexer currently, but like to keep in touch with the profession and continue to learn through the Newsletter and other benefits of AusSI membership.

For your interest, I also belong to a club here called AUSSI, a 'swimming group for the mature'. We are currently working up to the Masters Games which are on here in Alice Springs in October. We have a newsletter too, so watch out for duplicate titles in the Serials Catalogues!

Carolyn Kearney,
Alice Springs, NT.

Minerals index not buried

I refer to Chris Laughton's letter in the June issue of the Newsletter 16(5): 11-12. I thank him for his appreciative letter. I am sure he would not be surprised to learn that the index to

Geology of the mineral deposits of Australia and New Guinea did indeed exist on disk, but he probably would be surprised to learn that it was manually compiled in the first instance.

The index was deemed to be far too long and had to be cut. The other factual information which appeared in the original compilation had to be sacrificed as a result, much to the anguish of the indexer. The idea of an index on disk did not have great appeal, although I saw this as the only way to preserve all that valuable information.

The original compilation has remained on my computer for some considerable time until I received an enquiry as to whether it still existed in its uncut state. Yes, it does!

Dorothy Prescott,
East Brighton, Vic.

Indexing corrections: Statistical papers

Everyone makes mistakes. Those occurring in scholarly journals are often corrected by a notice in a later issue of the journal. But there is usually no way of discovering whether a given article has had any corrections, addenda or comments on it published. There is now an index published to assist researchers in verifying this hard-to-check information. All 78 of the major statistical journals have been searched for the years 1970-91. Relevant corrections, addenda and comments have been listed under the name of the first-named author of the original article, together with bibliographic citations. There are over 3200 entries and a separate index is provided for authors of comments and of co-authors of the original articles.

Hutchinson, T.P and Ke, Y. (1992) *Index to corrections, addenda, and comments that were published in statistics journals, 1970-1991*. Adelaide: Rumsby Scientific Publ.; A5 format; paperback; x., 296p.; A\$55.

NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members:

Mrs P. Bratulil, 1 Allawah Ave,
Frankston VIC 3199

Ms M. Duncan, 1 Beaver St,
East Malvern VIC 3145

Mrs J. Hoggan, PO Box 359
Penrith NSW 2751

Ms B. Jennings, 19 Tonks St,
Moorooka QLD 4105

Mr A. Jones, GPO Box 588D,
Melbourne VIC 3001

Mr H. MacLean, 47 Stonehaven Cres.
Deakin ACT 2600

Ms A. Parry, 4 Godfrey Road
Artarmon NSW 2064

Mr H. Walker, 2/1 Nelson St.
Randwick NSW 2031

NEWLY QUALIFIED

The following members have passed the requirements for becoming registered members of the Society since May, 1992:

Russell Brooks; Marilyn Buchanan;
Stephen Edgar; Sathy Marar; Sherrey
Quinn; David Stephensen; Neale
Towart.

DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER Issue
Contributions should reach the Editor
ASAP at the address below.



Contributions on 3.5" disks
will be especially appreciated
(preferably Macintosh disk format;
Microsoft Word software).

AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS:

GPO BOX 1251L
MELBOURNE, VIC 3001

President: Isabelle Mentha
(03) 418 7222

Vice Pres.: George Levick
(03) 418 7344

Secretary: Ian Odgers
(03) 418 7275

Treasurer: Joyce Korn
(03) 606 9610

Editor: Steve Sunter
(03) 418 7253

Fax: (03) 419 0459

Committee Members:

Max McMaster: (03) 418 7269

Cherryl Schauder: (03) 660 3059

Mary Long: (03) 846 0225

John Simkin: (03) 429 8817

Josephine McGovern: (03) 596 1555

NSW BRANCH

PO BOX R598
ROYAL EXCHANGE
SYDNEY, NSW 2000

President: Garry Cousins
(02) 955 1525

Secretary: Christine Winning
(02) 793 0793

Asst. Secretary: Alan Walker
(02) 380 5875



