



# Australian Society of Indexers

## NEWSLETTER

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### ACT Region Meetings

The next function of the ACT Region Branch of the Society is a dinner to be held at the Canberra Club, 45 West Row Canberra City, Tuesday 24 August at 7 pm. The speaker will be Peter Judge, formerly head of CSIRO Information Services and presently Managing Editor of *Incite*.

Cost of the dinner, including wine and juice \$25.00 for members, \$30.00 for non members.

Contact: Geraldine Triffitt (06) 246 1177

### Vic News

Max MacMaster reports that both Macrex Workshops held on May 22 had been very successful, with 14 people attending the introductory and 3 the advanced workshop. As a result a Macrex Users Group had been formed. Some 3-4 people intend to buy the software.

### Book Indexing Course

A Book Indexing course is being held at RMIT from the 6 September to 11 October. It will be a six week course held on Monday nights from 6.30pm until 8.45pm. Victorian members refer to accompanying flier for further details.

### Legal Indexing meeting

This meeting is tentatively planned for September. A venue and guest speakers have yet to be finalised.

### NSW Branch Meeting

#### CINDEX Demonstration

The makers of CINDEX Indexing Research, have announced plans to release a version of CINDEX for Macintosh computers late this year. They also have plans to introduce a version for Windows.

**Garry Cousins** will be giving a short demonstration of the current DOS version of CINDEX at the next NSW branch meeting. All are welcome; members who attended the meeting on MACREX might like to come along and compare it with CINDEX, and indexers who use Macintoshes might like to see the capabilities of the program, albeit on an IBM PC. A panel will join Garry to discuss what they like and dislike about the program, as well as the ways in which it has changed their work habits.

Garry has also recently returned from the American Society of Indexers' conference in Washington D.C. and will present a short report on the conference.

The meeting will be held on:

**Date:** Wednesday 11 August 1993

**Venue:** Seminar Room 1, Level 11,  
State Library of NSW

**Time:** 6pm at 6.30 pm

**Donation:** \$5.00



*"Have you heard about the  
CINDEX demonstration?"*

## EDITORIAL

### Promoting our Society

One of AusSI's committee members, Max MacMaster was invited to write an article for the July issue of *CHISIG Newsletter* about the Australian Society of Indexers.

Max wrote about the essential aspects of the society mentioning such factors as: membership composition, training for indexers, the role of *Indexers Available*, and membership benefits.

Max's article was beneficial as it not only helped to directly promote the society, but it also provided its own members with some interesting facts and figures that can be used to promote the society through our own network of friends, co-workers and family.

What about these quotes for opening lines at a dinner party!

"Did you know that The AusSI now boasts a membership of around 230 from both Australia and New Zealand. Our membership consists of mainly book indexers but we also have other types such as: database indexers, newspaper indexers, historical and genealogical indexers!" And wait there's more: "The



## The Wonderful World of Indexing

### Major International Indexing Events

*The world of indexing is a dynamic area, with new societies forming, conferences and seminars being held. This is a new column, introduced to alert and keep members abreast on what's happening internationally in this field*

#### Indexers found in China !!!!

The April '93 issue of *The Indexer* reported the establishment of the **China Society of Indexers (CSI)** in December 1991. This new body now has over 300 members, and held its first annual meeting and forum on indexing on 28-30 November

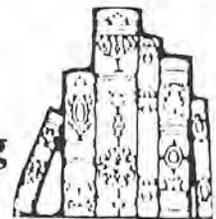
majority of members are based in Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra, and New Zealand. The reason for this is purely due to the location of the major publishing houses".

"Did you know that there is no academic courses in Australia solely on indexing. Indexing is a minor component of courses in editing, publishing or librarianship, so the society actually takes a prominent role in running or sponsoring short courses in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra".

"Did you know that the Society is also the official body for setting recommended rates for indexing in Australia. The 1993 rate is set at \$32.50/hour!"

"So when you are writing your next manual, textbook or report, and you need to have an index compiled, think of a professional indexer. An informed indexer not only has appropriate indexing skills, but also sufficient knowledge of the subject being indexed not to be left floundering."

And at \$32.50/hour there's no need to be shy about promoting yourself or the society!



1992 in Shanghai, with the theme, 'The past, present and future of indexing: research on indexing theory'.

CSI aims to promote theoretical research on indexing and disseminate knowledge of it; to offer training in index compilation and improve its quality; to accept commissions from publishers, enterprises of institutions for indexes on various subjects; and to translate works on indexing from other countries.

Here are the names and dates of some important international indexing events planned for the coming few years....so there's no excuse for missing out !!!

## International Indexing Events

1994

*May 13-14 26th Annual Meeting of American Society of Indexers.* Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, California.  
Contact: American Society of Indexers, P.O. Box 386, Port Aransas, TX 78373

*June 21-24 3rd International Society for Knowledge Organisation conference: 'Knowledge Organisation and Quality Management'.* Copenhagen, Denmark.

Contact: Hanne Albrechtsen, The Royal School of Librarianship, Birketinget 6,

DK-2300, Copenhagen S, Denmark;  
Tel+45 31 58 60 66.

*July 15-17 Society of Indexers conference.* Norwich City, College, Norwich, Norfolk.

Contact: Jill Halliday, The Old Maltsters, Pulham St Mary Diss, Norfolk IP21 4QT

1995

*31 March-2 April Australian Society of Indexers International Conference, 'Indexers: Partners in Publishing'.* Marysville, Victoria.

Contact: AusSI Conference Committee, GPO Box 1251, Melbourne, Victoria 3001, Australia



## BOOK REVIEW



### Modern Australian Usage

by Nicholas Hudson  
Oxford University Press, 1993. 400 p.,  
index. ISBN 0-19-554860-4 H/Back  
\$29.95

### Reviewed by John Bangsund

Nick Hudson is a man of great learning, enthusiasm, humour and generosity of spirit. His immense knowledge of publishing, of writing, editing and typography, of the whole craft and mechanics and business of the trade, would barely be contained by an encyclopaedia. Somehow he has distilled this knowledge, and a good deal of his inimitable character, into one handy little 450 page book. In more senses than one, *Modern Australian Usage* may be described as the essential Hudson.

The book's title pays homage to the great Henry Watson Fowler's dictionary of Modern English Usage (which Hudson says might more appropriately have been called *Modern British Usage*). It also reflects Oxford University Press's regard for Nick Hudson, as does the Press's device on the book's spine: not every Oxford book carries that mark. Hudson acknowledges Fowler's inspiration, but acknowledges also Dupre's *Encyclopedie du Bon Francais*; he likes Dupre's use of

the one-word sentence 'Soit!', and claims that from him he learnt the secret of ebullient confidence. I don't believe that. I reckon it comes naturally.

As you browse in Hudson you soon realise that this book is not an Australianised Fowler, certainly not in the sense that Margaret Nicholson's *Dictionary of American-English Usage* was an Americanised Fowler. In fact, for some time its working title was 'A Dictionary of Writers' Problems', and that is a clue to the book's nature. Such entries as dictionary (choice of), copyright, defamation, prejudice, ghost writer, publish, publishing, contracts, editor, keyboarding, typography and kern may stretch a little the concept of 'usage' - but the information they contain is most useful, and not easily come by.

Writers are often uncertain, for example, about what a book editor's function is; so are editors, for that matter. Hudson covers this book-length subject in two and a half pages, beginning with a startlingly obvious statement of principle: 'An editor's main responsibility is to satisfy the reader'. There are publishers who think the editor's main job is to keep the accountant happy. A truly professional editor will satisfy everyone concerned, but there aren't many editors of that sort around. This book may help

to redress this situation; I would certainly recommend Hudson as much to editors as to writers. I know some accountants who will enjoy it too.

Hudson's first concern is the language that Australians speak and write, not just the words for flora and fauna, or the 'backblocks' and 'bathers' and 'duco', but the more subtle differences of expression that distinguish Australian from the other main branches of English. Next he is concerned with formal communication ('in which the form is important as well as the content'), with effectively conveying thoughts from one mind to another by means of writing. A knowledge of words and their meanings is essential to this, but unlike some other books on usage currently available, this one does not provide a checklist of common mistakes. If you think there is such a word as 'majesterial', or if you don't know what 'burgeoning' or 'enormity' or 'begging the question' means, you look elsewhere. Other dictionaries will help you to avoid being wrong, but this one is for those who know there is 'a difference between not being wrong and being right'.

'Correctness' is essential to formal communication, but what is this elusive quality? Hudson discusses the matter succinctly, and provides a workable answer. He is far more concerned with

your awareness of problems than your choice of solutions, providing they are sensible. His book is for 'people who want to make up their own minds'. It follows that he is not overly concerned with consistency:

*it is in many respects admirable that a book should be at least internally consistent. However, remembering the fates of businesses which go to the wall with their account books in perfect order, one must always remember that literary consistency is means to an end - clarity - not an end in itself.*

Clarity, awareness, inclusiveness - such refreshing, positive works - and Hudson never loses sight of these principles, even (no, make that especially) in his most wickedly funny moments. Try, for example, the entry on obscurantism, 'a guide to some strategies to minimise communication'.

Language is both a minefield and a cherry orchard. Nick Hudson invites us in, saying 'Here, try some of these, they're scrumptious. Mind the pips, and watch where you walk. Isn't it a splendid day!

**Note:** This review was published in *The Society of Editors Newsletter*, May 1993 issue. Reproduced by permission of the author.

## LETTERS

### *Inverted Headings*

*A letter from Michael Wyatt adds more to the Inverted Headings, Subheadings and Functions debate.*

I have been following the discussion on inverted headings and the use of propositions in the Newsletter with interest. Although I agree with most of what Hans H. Wellisch says, there are exceptions to every rule. How do other readers solve the following problems?

Occasionally there is a book, often for a specialist audience, that uses only the second element of a phrase that in common usage is referred to often and only as in a book on archaeology, "burial

mounds" are referred to often and only as "mounds". In a chapter on burial customs, "mounds" can only mean "burial mounds", but in the index to the entire book it could mean almost anything.

- \* Should I use the common terminology "burial mounds" in direct order in spite of the usage in the text?
- \* Should I follow the text and use "mounds" as the headword, which, when appropriately qualified, produces the inverted headings "mounds, burial"?

(In either case I would, of course, supply a cross-reference from the other forms.)

## Prepositions

Very often we construct a heading followed by a subheading, only to find at the end that the heading has no location references of its own and only one subheading. At that stage we convert the whole thing into a single heading. If the subheading is one that "precedes its main heading syntactically" (as Wellisch says) and therefore "does not need a preposition at the end", what do I do when I combine it with its heading to form a new heading?

- \* Put the preposition back ("horses, domestication of", "gramophone, invention of")?
- \* Leave it off ("horses, domestication", "gramophone, invention")?
- \* Convert one of the nouns into another part of speech ("horse domestication", "gramophone invented")?

These are problems I face quite often, and would like to hear how others have solved them.

Michael Wyatt

## Indexing by computer

An author proudly presented me with a copy of his book with the statement that his computer had "carved out" the index. "It was simple" he explained. I had not encountered one of these before so I was curious. On my first look my thoughts went out to Bernard Levin, that champion of indexers. How he would have ranted and raved!

The book of 620 pages of text had an index consisting of 648 computer generated headings. Miraculously there were 2 subheadings. The programme must have been clever.

The index measured the same single column width of the text and the first thing that struck me as I whisked through the pages was rows and rows of undifferentiated locators in neatly arranged columns. I looked more closely at the curious assortment of headings so remotely associated with the title of the

book. These included baby; boxing; clergyman; corpse; diabetes; practical joke; science and witchcraft, etc. I checked one or two and had to read a page twice to spot the single phrase like 'old age' which appeared in a footnote as part of the title of an article. 'old people' was the heading immediately after, with a related 'see also youth'. I spent some time counting the number of undifferentiated locators attached to some headings as a large number had between 25-100 and 12 exceeded that number. Of these 3 had 161, 173 and 227 locators respectively, which meant that the latter term appeared in every 2.73 pages of text and the software had meticulously picked them all up. A user interested in the subject of the book would not have been pleased to be directed to every page from 1-10 on which this word occurred in passing.

There were a few other features which drew attention. 440 headings had see also cross-references and in a large number there were between 10 and 26 'related' terms. Two examples would suffice:

stranger see also God  
nuisance see also House of Lords;  
Pollution

43 headings had see cross-references, one of which carried 93 'preferred' terms and another 56. It was not surprising to find that 'general principles' was cross-referred to 23 preferred terms!

"Carved out" it certainly was!!!!

Anonymous

### Indexers Medal..... A reminder

For all of you who are intending to submit applications for the Indexers Medal, the deadline is drawing near, so be quick!

The society will accept entries no later than **Friday 27 August 1993**.

## The Australian Book Fair

The Australian Book Fair was held in Sydney from 24 to 27 June. The first two days were open only to the book trade, and the final two were open to the public.

The National Book Council had a small stall there, and offered space to the Society of Editors (NSW). As an active member of the Society of Editors, I was asked to spend half a day at the stall, and the Society suggested that I also represent the Australian Society of Indexers. I took a couple of posters, handfuls of brochures, and copies of *Indexers Available*. In spite of there being very little space to display the handouts or to pin up the posters, we received a number of queries on AusSI's work during the two trade days, mainly from senior editors who need to commission indexers, and from book people who want to learn more about indexing.

(Gosh! imagine the response had we had our own stall! thanks for your efforts Michael. *Ed*)

**Michael Wyatt**

## AUSTRALIAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS:

GPO Box 1251  
Melbourne VIC 3001

**President:** Isabelle Mentha  
(03) 418 7201

**Vice Pres:** George Levick  
(03) 418 7344

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

**Treasurer:** Joyce Gillespie  
(03) 654 8527

or (03) 710 1270

**Editor:** Elizabeth Baratto  
(03) 418 7466 Wed 1-5pm

**Fax:** c/- (03) 419 0459

### Committee Members:

Max McMaster: (03) 571 6341

Cherryl Schauder: (03) 660 3059

Mary Long: (03) 846 0225

John Simkin: (03) 429 8817

Josephine McGovern: (03) 596 1555

Steve Sunter: (03) 418 7253

### NSW BRANCH

PO Box R598  
Royal Exchange SYDNEY, 2000

**President:** Alan Walker  
(02) 380 5875

**Fax:** (02) 361 0651

**Secretary:** Michael Wyatt  
(02) 281 0460

**Treasurer:** Kingsley Siebel  
(02) 477 3149

**Committee:** Garry Cousins, Mary Turner,  
Lorraine Doyle, Christine Winning

### ACT REGION BRANCH

GPO Box 2069  
Canberra ACT 2601

**President:** Geraldine Triffitt  
(06) 246 1177

**Fax:** (06) 249 7310

**Secretary:** Jenni Cole  
(06) 243 4211

**Treasurer:** Susan MacDougall  
(06) 201 2645

**Committee:** Hilary Kent, Laurel Tunks,  
Margaret Hyland, Barbara Dickens

**Next Deadline - August 14, 1993**



News, views and reviews are always welcome. Floppy disks will be appreciated where articles are longer than one A4 page (preferably 3.5" Macintosh disks; Microsoft Word software; IBM is also OK).