



Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter

PO Box R598, ROYAL EXCHANGE NSW 1225 VOLUME 24, NUMBER 6, JULY 2000 ISSN 0314-3767

In the beginning. *Jean Hagger remembers the beginnings of our Society.*

The Australian Society of Indexers was formed at a meeting held at CSIRO in Melbourne on 27 April, 1976. Twenty-two people were present and apologies and correspondence from a number of individuals and organisations were tabled. The meeting was chaired by Peter Dawe.

This meeting was a follow-on from one held on 12 November, 1975, which had been called to consider the future of the Society of Indexers in Australia. This Society had been formed in December 1972 by Harold Godfrey Green, research journalist and indexer, who was the Corresponding Member in Australia for the Society of Indexers. Realising the need for indexers to have a support network to help them overcome the problems of working in isolation, he contacted members of the Society of Indexers in Australia. They voted to form an association for the purpose of meeting regularly to present papers and hold discussions on topics of interest to indexers. The contribution of Godfrey Green to this Society was phenomenal, to say the least. He was in effect its Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and Editor of the Newsletter, a bi-monthly publication which provided not only news about the Society but also the texts of papers presented at meetings. These in themselves are a valuable resource, from the one delivered by Jean Uhl on the indexing of criminal records to that by Josephine McGovern on indexing in a parliamentary library.

In September, 1975, upon his remarriage and move to the Victorian rural town of Maryborough, Godfrey Green resigned from his position of Corresponding Member in Australia of the Society of Indexers, naming Jean Uhl as the Interim Corresponding Member to take charge of correspondence and other records until members had a chance to air their views on the future of the Society. At that time, there were 78 members, both individual and corporate, resident in most states with the largest number in Melbourne.

A special meeting on 12 November, 1975, chaired by Henry Thorburn, formed an interim committee to

prepare an agenda for a meeting to be held in April 1976, to consider the Society's future existence and activities. As stated at the beginning of this article, the meeting was duly held and motions to form the Australian Society of Indexers and to dissolve the Society of Indexers in Australia were passed. A constitution was approved and proposals for a programme of activities were discussed. Office bearers were elected as follows: President, Clyde Garrow; Vice President, Jean Uhl; Hon. Treasurer, Joan Haughton; Hon. Secretary, Sylvia Ramsden; general committee members, Coryl Muntz and John Hawker.

The first and second annual reports indicate that the new Society was 'quick off the mark'. Quarterly meetings were held at which guest speakers gave interesting papers; a Newsletter edited by John Simkin quickly became the life-line of the widely spread membership. Probably its most notable achievement was its affiliation with the Society of Indexers.

(Continued on page 54)

What's Inside

History of AusSI	51, 54
News and announcements	52-53
NSW Branch—Annual reports 5 Aug	52
Vic Branch—Electronic access 20 July	53
Indexer jokes	55-56
Spanish names	57, 59
Letters to the editor (Strings and GST)	58
Newsletter and executive contacts	60

Letter to the Editor

Dear Glenda,

Comments on two items in the current Newsletter (June 2000):

GST—Whether to register for GST or not depends on the amount of input credits which can be claimed. In the case of indexers, as for authors and editors, the amount is not great. In my own case I estimate it to be less than \$400 per annum with the greatest item being GST on maintenance for a database package which I use for bibliographic work rather than indexing as such. I also estimate that the amount of time needed for the paper work involved in making the claims would be at least 10 hours per year, which at the normal rate for indexing work would equal \$400. So why bother? At the same time it seems that our other major item is computer hardware which is likely to become cheaper under GST. My conclusion is that if we ignore GST, pay it on whatever we must, and continue to charge our usual hourly rates, we will come out just about even, perhaps even a little better off. Remember, our recommended hourly rates were originally worked out taking account of a wide range of oncosts; in the whole picture GST would hardly rate.

Indexes to biographies—Hazel Bell raises an interesting question. My view is that of a reader rather than an indexer of biographies. There is a weakness in Hazel's argument and it lies in her use of the word 'important'. Who is the indexer to decide what is important? An indexer undertakes to index to a certain depth. Everything which comes within the definition of this depth is important. The indexer may have the temerity to decide that the information that a certain person was born on a Saturday is relatively unimportant; thus the index entry will be one of an undifferentiated string. The reader is trying to find the section in which the author refers to X as having been born on a Saturday. But it is not indexed under the subheading 'birth'. The result—a silly note telling the reader that what he wants may be here in this list of 'twenty minor references...none of which is worth emphasizing with a subheading'. I urge the Wheatley Medal judges to stick to their original decision.

John Simkin.

Indexers' Medal 2000

More information in last month's newsletter, or on the web at www.aussi.org.

The Australian Society of Indexers is again offering its annual Medal for the most outstanding index to a book or periodical compiled in Australia or New Zealand.

To be eligible for the award, the index must be in print and must have been first published after 1997. It must have been compiled in Australia or New Zealand even though the text to which it refers may have originated elsewhere.

Publishers, indexers and all interested persons are invited to nominate indexes which meet the above criteria, and which they regard as worthy of consideration. Indexers are encouraged to nominate their own works.

Please send recommendations, with bibliographic details, and if possible together with a copy of the book/periodical (which will be returned), to:

The Secretary,
Australian Society of Indexers,
PO Box 1251, Melbourne Vic 3001

as soon as possible, but no later than Friday, 10 December 2000.

For further information, please contact Jenny Restarick: telephone/fax: 03 95282539, email: jenny.restarick@enquiries.csiro.au

Letter from the Editor re Strings in Biographies

If we consider that a perfect index subtly shows the balance and significance of every locator, then I agree with Hazel Bell (*AusSI Newsletter* June 2000) that we should have multiple locators. But when we take into account other considerations, such as the admonition to 'Save the time of the user', then the value of subdivisions to separate those many locators becomes apparent. I suspect that many users would vote for an easier-to-use index in preference to a perfectly balanced one.

I don't usually like strings of undifferentiated locators, but I respect the right of another indexer to use these when they consider the situation warrants it. It would certainly seem more realistic for the medal criteria to allow the use of strings of locators in certain circumstances rather than forbidding them outright. GB

Genealogical after-the-fact indexing

Yes, I expect we've all spent long weekends poring over every word of a thousand-page, minuscule-type-size biography or county history! And any good genealogist will tell you you SHOULD read every word, too. You never know what unexpected info or connections will turn up.

Genealogy is one of the very few areas where there might actually be a market for after-the-fact indexing. But it tends to be done NOT for money but as a volunteer service for other researchers. Older family histories are often indexed by relevant family associations, older local or county histories by local or county societies, and so on.

You can get around the copyright problem by limiting yourself to older unindexed volumes, of which there are many. (Genealogists, as noted, prize good indexes and almost all recent works are indexes.) But the good older ones generally get reprinted by one of the handful of publishers who specialize in that (GPC, Family Line, Heritage House, Polyanthos, etc), and they usually do an index as a 'value added' sort of thing. All the old Goodspeed histories have now been reprinted, for instance.

There are also numerous microfilm sets/series of local histories which you can usually find in larger genealogy collections: Indiana county histories and so on. These were filmed as-is, usually with no indexes. I've thought for some years that a worthwhile (and marketable) project might be to do a consolidated index to the hundred or so volumes in one of those series. That means a few thousand hours in front of a microfilm reader with a laptop. (Or in front of a desktop if, like me, you own a film reader...)

Fame awaits the person who compiles an every-name index to the Draper manuscripts, which have been filmed but not transcribed, so you have to read early 19th century penmanship on microfilm. But so far, the Wisconsin Historical Society won't give anyone permission to compile and publish such an index because they plan to do it themselves... someday. Maybe in a couple of decades.

I've done some publishing of compiled records from courthouses and I hope to do more, now that I have time, and there's ALWAYS a market for that (larger or smaller, depending on the type of records and where they're located). Personally, I'm investigating the notarial records in some of the nearby parishes along the River, here in south Louisiana. The

marriage, probate, and other 'easy' records have been done long since, which is likely to be the case almost everywhere, but if you know the local courthouses and the more obscure sorts of public records, you can probably find unmined data. But then you have to know how to deal with the genealogical market! And you can't expect to earn a living at it! :)

Apologies for running on with this, but it's an area not many people outside the relatively small coterie of genealogical editors and publishers ever think about, or are even aware of.

I am grateful to Michael Smith from Smith Editorial Services for allowing me to reprint this contribution to Index-L.

UK genealogy portal

The UK genealogy portal at www.ukgenealogy.co.uk was launched in April. It aims to help anyone who is researching their UK ancestors.

There is a page of resources for each country and county in the UK. In addition to genealogy links there are links to other sites of local interest and online maps of the area.

Information emailed by John Oyston

(Spanish names, Cont. from p. 57)

Professional names

This only applies to women: a woman who runs her own business is addressed as a married woman but with her own surname. So if María was with her husband's business associates she would be addressed as 'Señora González'. If she was with her own business associates she would be addressed as 'Señora Cañedo'.

Then there's the additional complication of knowing what is a given-name and what is a surname, as these can be very familiar, but the general rule is to work backwards from the end of the name. Discount anything preceded by 'de' and the next word back is the secondary surname. In Spain they alphabetise by the primary surname, which is one back from this. Thus, Juan González Martín y Cañedo Rodríguez de Arcos would be listed under 'G' for González. The primary surname (regardless of sex) is the indexing point.

Newsletter and Webmaster contacts

Editor: Glenda Browne
 Webmaster: Jonathan Jermeay
 email: webmaster@aussi.org,
 web: <http://www.aussi.org>.
 ISSN: paper: 0314-3767
 electronic: 1326-2718

This newsletter is sent free to all members of the Australian Society of Indexers. It is published 11 times a year, with a combined issue for Jan/Feb. Opinions expressed in the newsletter are those of the individual contributors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Society.

Copy should be sent to the editor by the last day of each month for publication in the middle of the next month. Please contact me if you have any questions about suitable items for publication. The editor reserves the right to cut and edit material. If greater than one A4 page, please send files on a disk or via email.

Graphics

Please send image files in Windows Metafile (WMF), JPEG, or PCX format. Photographs and camera-ready copy can be scanned by the editor.

Advertisement charges

Full page: \$90; Half page: \$50; Quarter page: \$25.
 Yearly rates: 11 for the price of 9.

Send copy to:

Glenda Browne
 PO Box 307
 Blaxland NSW 2774
 ph: (02) 47 398 199; fax: (02) 47 398 189
 email: newsletter@aussi.org

Membership charges

\$52 per year
 \$26 half year (July to Dec)

The Society was planning to include a GST component in the subscription rate for subscriptions after 1 July 2000, but after consultation with the Australian Taxation Office and our accountant, we find it is not necessary to register for GST. Therefore the GST component has been abolished, making a half yearly subscription \$26.

The Indexer (International indexing journal)

Christine Shuttleworth, Exec. Editor
 Flat 1, 25 St Stephen's Avenue
 London W12 8JB
 email: cshuttle@dircon.co.uk

Corresponding Editor Aust/NZ:
 Glenda Browne, details above.

Cost: \$28 for AusSI members.

Registration

Michael Harrington, work phone (02) 6248 8297,
<http://www.aussi.org/profissues/registration.htm>

National Committee

PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 1225,
 ph: 0500 525 005

President: Garry Cousins ph/fax (02) 9560 0102,
 email: president@aussi.org

Vice President

Alan Walker ph (02) 9368 0174, fax (02) 9358 5593
 email: vicepres@aussi.org

Secretary: Lorraine Doyle (02) 8587 7229 (w)
 (02) 9876 4218 (h), fax (02) 9888 2229
 email: secretary@aussi.org

Treasurer: Tricia Waters (02) 9416 7664 (h)
 email: treasurer@aussi.org

Membership Secretary:

Michael Wyatt 0500 539 973 (w),
 fax (02) 9331 7785, email: memsec@aussi.org

Committee Members: P. Johnstone, C. Kearney, M. Wyatt

NSW branch

PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 1225

President: Madeleine Davis (02) 9514 3176 (w), (02) 4787 6277
 (h) fax (02) 4787 6069, email: redcliff@hermes.net.au

Vice-President: Michael Wyatt, details above

Secretary: Lorraine Doyle (02) 8587 7229 (w)
 (02) 9876 4218 (h), fax (02) 9888 2229

email: secretary@aussi.org

Treasurer: Pamela Johnstone ph/fax
 (02) 4757 3045, email: olc@pnc.com.au

Committee Members: G. Cousins, C. Kearney, A. Walker;
 T. Waters

Victorian branch (ABN 58 867 106 986)

GPO Box 1251, Melbourne Vic 3001

President: Margaret Findlay, ph. (03) 9277 5555,
 email: findlay@acer.edu.au

Vice President: Max McMaster ph/fax (03) 9571 6341,
 email: mindexer@interconnect.com.au

Secretary: Jenny Restarick ph/fax (03) 9528 2539 (h),
 email: Jenny.Restarick@enquiries.csiro.au

Treasurer: Ann Philpott

Committee Members: E. Wood-Ellem, J. McGovern,
 A. Philpott, J. Simkin, G. Suter, RM Serong

ACT region branch

GPO Box 2069, Canberra ACT 2601

President: Lynn Farkas, ph (02) 6286 3529, fax (02) 6286 6570
 Email: lfarkas@pcug.org.au

Immediate Past President: Geraldine Triffitt
 ph (02) 6231 4975, email: gtriffitt@interact.net.au

Secretary: Shirley Campbell
 ph (02) 6285 1006; fax (02) 6234 2237,
 email: shirley.campbell@alianet.alia.org.au

Treasurer: Penny Whitten, ph (02) 6274 7411
 Email: pwhitten@interact.net.au

Committee Members: E. Bynkowski, R. Hyslop, L. Tunks, B. Edwards

Qld group with Soc. Ed. (Qld)

Contact: Julie Forrest (07) 3353 0120 (h)
 email: J.Forrest@incauley.acu.edu.au

SA group with Soc. Ed. (SA)

Contact: Susan Rintoul (08) 8235 1535 (h), fax (08) 8235 914
 email: seaview@seaviewpress.com.au

WA contact

Contact: Ling Heang, 0418 941 861 (h), fax: (08) 9358 3896
 email: HEANGSL@bigfoot.com