

Australian Society of Indexers Volume 26, Number 2, March 2002 Newsletter

AusSI members departure survey

Jonathan Jermy, Publicity Officer

AusSI membership numbers are in a slow decline. Like many professional organisations we have a very high turnover, losing 20–25 per cent of our membership every year. If this decline could be arrested AusSI would achieve rapid growth. Before beginning a membership drive, then, I felt it was important to know why people left AusSI and if possible how we could reduce these losses.

In December 2001 I sent out a survey to 155 ex-members who had left AusSI in the last four years. I asked them to indicate why they had left and whether there were any changes to AusSI that would encourage them to renew their memberships. Although respondents were allowed to make multiple responses and rank them, many did not and so I have treated all responses as equivalent. In general, the results show that people leave AusSI not through dissatisfaction with the Society but because they are no longer involved or interested in indexing. A breakdown of the figures follows and some conclusions are discussed at the end of the report.

Number of returns: out of 154 questionnaires I have so far received 68 responses, a rate of 44 per cent. All results and conclusions, therefore, are based on somewhat less than half the sample population, and should be regarded as indications rather than statistically valid measurements. About half the respondents added comments of their own to the survey.

Reasons for leaving AusSI

There were nine specified reasons plus 'Other'. They are listed below in order of the number of responses to each.

- ☐ No longer involved in indexing in Australia/New Zealand: 30
- ☐ Other reasons: 18
- ☐ Too busy to participate: 17

- ☐ Couldn't find work as an indexer: 16
- ☐ Membership too expensive: 13
- ☐ Not enough training and assistance provided: 10
- ☐ No coverage in my region: 10
- ☐ Not enough activities to make it worth staying: 5
- ☐ Joined an alternative organisation which meets my needs better: 4
- ☐ Disagreed with the philosophy of the Society: 0

There were a total of 123 responses across 68 returns, making 1.80 responses on average from each person. Where respondents specified 'Other' reasons these often overlapped one or more of the specified responses.

Changes to AusSI

Respondents were asked: Are there any changes to AusSI which would encourage you to renew your membership? There were nine specified responses plus 'Other', which are listed below in order of the number of responses to each. With a total of 69 responses, each person averaged 1.05 responses.

- ☐ Society more active in finding work for new indexers: 18
- ☐ More training and seminars: 17
- ☐ A role in providing distance education: 14
- ☐ Cheaper membership: 10
- ☐ Other: 5
- ☐ More interaction with other disciplines: 4
- ☐ Society purchases and makes available equipment or books: 2

- ☐ More communication between members: 2
- ☐ More social meetings: 1
- ☐ A change in AusSI philosophy: 0

Training and education

The areas specified for training and education were: web indexing (5), basic indexing (3), refresher courses (2), information architecture, how to find work, genealogical & historical indexing, archives, electronic indexing, specialised indexing and keeping up to date (1 each).

Other organisations

Other organisations that ex-members belonged to were ALIA (9), Australian Society of Archivists (2), Society of Editors NSW (3), Society of Editors Can-

Continued on page 16

What's inside

- 13 Departure survey
- 14 Noticeboard
- 17 Elizabeth Moys
- 18 The future of the knowledge society
- 20 Dates for your diary
- 22 From the literature

Notice

New South Wales Branch AGM

The Annual General Meeting of the NSW Branch will be held at 6.30 pm on Wednesday 13 March 2002.

The AGM will be held at the New Hong Kong Restaurant, 44 Macleay Street, Potts Point, NSW 2011, opposite the Landmark Parkroyal Hotel (ph 9356 8481).

Street parking can be difficult in this area. The Kings Cross parking station (Ward Avenue) and the Kings Cross railway station are both five minutes' walk from the restaurant. The 311 bus stops at the front door.

The AGM will be followed by a Chinese banquet, at the subsidised cost of \$25.00 per person, drinks included.

RSVP: Alan Walker by 10 March 2001 (ph 9368 0174, fax: 9358 5593, email alan.walker@so54.aone.net.au)

News from the Victorian Branch

Order in the House !!

Mr Bruce Davidson, Parliamentary Librarian, Victoria, has invited members of the Victorian Branch to visit this wonderful library on the evening of Tuesday April 9.

We shall be having a tour of the library rooms and their unique architectural features such as hanging lights, shelf ladders, round reading desk etc, all dating from the 1850s and still in situ today. Since that time services provided for our Members of Parliament have changed dramatically, from paper copies of legislative records shipped out from 'home', the US and other colonies such as Canada, etc, and generally taking months to arrive, to today's electronic tools which can be searched, copied or transmitted direct to an MP's office at the touch of a few keystrokes.

Bruce will be proudly demonstrating the Library's own Intranet and the excellent resources it contains, as well as the numerous searching tools used by Library staff to answer the myriad of queries posed by our electoral representatives.

After the tour we shall be dining at a nearby medium-priced restaurant with Bruce as our dinner guest.

As there is limited space within the library for group viewings of screens and the historic collection itself, our numbers must be limited to 20 persons. I already have two acceptances so please email, phone, or fax as soon as possible to Jenny Restarick, tel/fax 03 9528 2539 or email jenny.restarick@csiro.au to get your name on the short list.

New members

We warmly welcome two new Victorian members, Ms Anna Gifford of Camberwell and Mrs Susan Barnes of Golden Square.

Queensland contact

The contact phone number during business hours for Jo Douglass, our new Queensland contact person, should have read (07) 3239 0876.

Indexing: the Manual of Good Practice

We are in a lot of trouble with exchange rates over Pat Booth's manual and have somehow managed to make it the most expensive of indexing monographs. Although the Jan/Feb issue of the newsletter said otherwise, Pat Booth's book is listed in *Sidelights* at UK58 pounds or US\$116 Rest of World.

IASC/SCAD Bulletin

Please note that Rachel Rosenberg, wordgoddess@sympatico.ca is now the editor of the *IASC/SCAD Bulletin*, replacing Howard Baker.

Noeline Bridge
International Liaison Officer, IASCISCAD

2002 subscription renewal

If you have not renewed your membership subscription, this is the last *Newsletter* you will receive. If you have mislaid your renewal form, please contact the Membership Secretary on memsec@aussi.org.

UNSW Continuing Professional Development

I would like to let everyone know that our Continuing Professional Development 2002 schedule of seminars and workshops is now available on our Web site <http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/>

board

We have an exciting program with more to come.

May 3, 10 & 17

Introduction to Book Indexing

May 24

Computer-aided Indexing

May 30

Analysing, abstracting and indexing documents for databases

June 14

Indexing Web pages and documents

June 21

Synonyms and taxonomies: thesaurus design for information architects

Sept 6 & 13

Indexing and storing images and multimedia

We are delighted that Robert M Hayes, Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Los Angeles will be in Sydney and will offering two seminars and a workshop in early April.

- The Internet as viewed from the United States today (seminar)
- Cooperative decisions among libraries (seminar)
- Models for library management, decision-making and planning (workshop)

Maureen Henninger M.Henninger@unsw.EDU.AU
Coordinator of Continuing Professional Development
Faculty of Commerce and Economics
The University of New South Wales

The Indexer

Additional copies of *The Indexer* vol. 22, no. 3, April 2001 have been received. If you subscribed after February 2001 and did not receive this issue, contact the Membership Secretary on memsec@aussi.org to receive your copy.

ALIA 2002 conference

Early bird deadline extended to 15 March

Register for the ALIA 2002 conference by 15 March and save \$100. The deadline has been extended by two weeks by popular demand, but 15 March will definitely be it, so get that paper work done! The full program is at <http://www.alia.org.au/conferences/alia2002>. You can even register online.

Be exposed to 16 eminent and sometimes controversial speakers including:

- Dr Terry Cutler, Chair, Australia Council
- Mr Hugh Mackay, psychologist, social commentator and writer
- Dr Christopher Chia, Chief Executive, National Library Board of Singapore

- Mr Tim Besley, AO, AM President, Australian Academy of Technological Sciences & Engineering
- Professor Vicki Sara, Chief Executive Officer, Australian Research Council
- Dr Martyn Forrest, Chair, Australian Information and Communication Technology in Education Committee
- Emeritus Professor Geoffrey Bolton, AO Pro-Chancellor Murdoch University
- Dr Ken Boston, AO Managing Director, TAFE NSW & Director General of Education and Training.
- Archbishop Peter Carnley, AO Archbishop of Perth & Primate of the Anglican Church in Australia
- Ms Sue Middleton, Grassroots Development
- Professor Ann Harding, Director, National Centre for Social and Economic Modelling
- Mr Phil Ruthven, Chairman, IBIS Information
- Ms Patricia Schroeder, President & CEO, American Publishing Association
- Dr Marianne Broadbent, Group Vice-President & Head of Research Executive Programs Worldwide, Gartner
- Professor Malcolm Gillies, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Education), Australian National University
- Professor Neil McLean (chair, ALIA 2002 Program Committee)

Read their bio's on the conference web site

Register online (or download the registration form)

Think about the issues facing your institution, your sector, your profession

Contribute to the online Issues Forum (details on the conference website)

Turn up and be better informed, involved and inspired!

Queensland freelance workshop

The Queensland Society of Editors is running a workshop on setting up as a freelance editor and proofreader. The workshop will run 10 am to 4.30 pm on Saturday 13 April at the University of Queensland (Gordon Greenwood room 225). The cost is \$85 for members and \$170 for non-members.

Experienced freelance editors will discuss the pros and cons of freelancing, offering advice on practical matters such as quoting, tendering and record-keeping. An accountant will also deliver a presentation on how the new tax system affects freelancers.

For further information, or to request a booking form, please contact Tim Bugler on timb@uqconnect.net or 3378 1807.

Indexes in Fact and Fiction

Hazel Bell's *Indexes in Fact and Fiction*, announced in our October/November 2001 issue, has received a glowing review in the 9 March issue of the UK

berra (2), Victorian Writers' Centre, Society of Editors (Queensland), NSW Writers' Centre, Mapping Services Institute, Law Society, Institute for Information Management, Fellowship of Australian Writers, Society for Australian Genealogists, Australian Society of Technical Communicators, North American Serials Interest Group, Information Resources Management Association, IAETEFL, Australian Society of Authors, and ALA (1 each).

Many respondents wrote interesting and sometimes quite detailed comments. These tended to confirm the very transient and volatile nature of indexing work, with sources of work often drying up over time and people having to seek alternative income. Some ex-members felt themselves unable to keep up with the technological changes in indexing, while others had moved from insecure casual work to secure full-time jobs in other areas.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1 The overall conclusion to be drawn from the survey is that some turn-

over is inevitable: people join AusSI because of an interest in indexing which may lapse, or an ambition to take up indexing which is not fulfilled. Others who have been involved in indexing will find their work coming to an end and will change jobs or retire. AusSI has very little control over this area, but it might prevent disappointment and frustration if we were to make it clearer that indexing opportunities are limited and that training and skills are required to make a successful job of it.

AusSI prepare and circulate a brochure and/or Web page for potential members describing the industry and the volatile and limited employment opportunities it provides.

- 2 Several ex-members were interested in training, especially distance education. Steps are underway to develop a training policy for AusSI and the results of the survey indicate that these should have a beneficial effect on membership.

These responses be taken into account in preparing AusSI's training policy.

- 3 Several members had lapsed simply because they had failed to receive or notice a renewal form.

A follow-up email be sent to lapsed members shortly after the renewal form. Members should also be reminded that they can rejoin through the website.

- 4 Several ex-members indicated that membership was too expensive; while it is probably impractical to reduce membership fees for all members it might be possible to provide a cheaper membership category for members who are retired or unemployed along the lines of the reduced student fee.

AusSI consider offering a reduced membership fee to people on lower incomes, including unemployed and retired members.

- 5 Four ex-members wished for more interaction with other disciplines. More meetings with related groups (for example, editors).

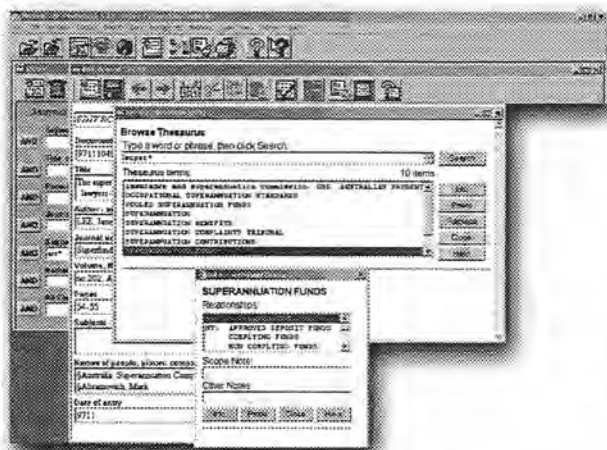
- 6 A number of ex-members were also members of related organisations, for example, ALIA, societies of editors, and writers' centres.

More communication with related groups, as these may be sources of potential members.

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Elizabeth M Moys, MBE, BA, FLA

Indexers throughout the world have been saddened to hear of the death of Betty Moys on 1 February 2002. Betty was one of those indomitable Englishwomen who enjoyed travelling and making friends with colleagues wherever she went. As a young librarian she went to Africa to look after a law collection, and finding the Dewey Decimal Classification inappropriately American in its approach for common law jurisdictions, she devised what has become famous in the law library world as the Moys Classification. The first edition was published in 1968, and the fourth edition, entitled *Moys Classification and Thesaurus*, was published in 2001.

This indicates something of her approach. She was always practical and helpful, and when something needed to be done, she usually jolly well did it. As well as launching the eponymous classification, she began a periodical for law indexers, entitled *Brief Entry*, and was a joint author of the (British) Society of Indexers' *Indexing Legal Materials* (SI Occasional Paper No. 2). She wrote, she edited, she indexed, she kept up with the technology, and she was always ready to share her knowledge and advice.

She was awarded the MBE in 1999 for her services to classification and indexing. In her two careers, over forty years, she served her professional colleagues in many ways. She was both President and Vice President of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, and both Treasurer and Vice President of the Society of Indexers.

She visited Australia and North America a number of times, meeting law librarians and indexers, delivering papers at conferences, and chairing sessions. I remember particularly her moderating a panel on accreditation at the ASI Seattle conference — a brave performance, given the heat which this topic can produce in American indexing circles. Betty was the best possible person to do it.

With Betty's death, I have lost a friend whom I have known since we were both librarians in London in the 1960s. The information profession has lost one of its experts, one who wore her expertise with modesty, humour and great generosity. Many librarians and indexers throughout the world will miss her and remember her with great affection.

Alan Walker,
President, Australian Society of Indexers

The British and Irish Association of Law Librarians (BIALL) is saddened to learn of the death of Betty Moys on Friday 1 February after several months' illness. The law library community will be the poorer for her unexpected loss and many of us will also feel the loss of a good friend.

Betty Moys' career spanned 40 years of law librarianship, general academic librarianship and, after her retirement in 1989, a new career in legal indexing. In all she excelled.

In law librarianship, her name is synonymous with the classification scheme for law, published in four editions between 1968 and 2001 and adopted by many law libraries around the world. But her activities in law librarianship encompassed so much more. She was one of that founding group who had such a formative influence on BIALL and, in her case, on its publications, despite the fact that she no longer worked in a law library after 1968. She took on editorship of its journal, *The Law Librarian* (1970–77), and contributed to its publications policy for many years, including editing both editions of the *Manual of Law Librarianship* (1976, 1987). During this period she was also active on BIALL Council and its committees. Her good sense and hard work helped make the Association what it is today.

In 1998 she was joint recipient of BIALL's Wallace Breem Award for editing *Information Sources in Law*, 2nd ed (1997). BIALL invited her to be its Vice President (1987–90), then President (1990–93). In 1999 she was awarded the MBE in recognition of her contribution to law indexing and classification.

This brief note merely scratches the surface of her many achievements and her contribution to BIALL. A full obituary will be published in *Legal Information Management*. Meanwhile, her many friends will remember her with affection and respect for her good humour, her fund of stories used to illustrate points in discussion, her sensible advice to BIALL and personally, and her ability to get things done expressed in her own words as 'arm-twisting'!

Barbara Tearle
President, British and Irish Association of Law Librarians

Letter to the Editor

I was saddened to read in the last issue of the *News/letter* about the untimely passing away of Kingsley Siebel.

I had the good fortune to share a room with Kingsley during the Katoomba conference in

September 1997. I remember his quiet and courteous manner, as well as his eagerness to talk to someone who had not been to a major indexing conference before. As well as his working knowledge, I was also very impressed with his

life story. He was one of those people whose shoes will be hard to fill.

Graham Clayton
Indexer,
CCH Australia Limited

The future of the knowledge society

Keynote address to the
'Partnerships in Knowledge' Conference
held Canberra 20-23 April 2001

Richard Walsh

'The future of the knowledge society' continues from our January/February issue. The paper will be concluded in our April issue.

During the next twenty years, newspaper companies will disappear as great manufacturing enterprises. What will arise in their place, in my view, will be entities more akin to today's syndication agencies. John Fairfax, for example, might be the exclusive managing agent, in all media, for maybe over 200 working journalists — high-profile bylines like Alan Ramsey and Michelle Grattan and Ross Gittins and Deidre Macken and Peter FitzSimons and Roy Masters and for a whole lot of lesser names, whose reputations are under construction. The best-known of these journalists may maintain websites to which people subscribe; here you may be able to read their columns daily online or participate in their chat-rooms. The publishing company will manage their output in whatever medium is appropriate to their talents; it will market them and provide the infrastructure they will require — subeditors, researchers, fact checkers, legal vetting etc.

We will not define print companies by the appearance of their output but by the subject matter they specialise in.

When David Salter and I were forced to close down Australia's first daily online newsletter, *The Zeitgeist Gazette*, of fond memory, in March last year we boldly predicted that it, or something like it, would one day rise again. When we launched the *Gazette*, in 1999, we flew in the face of conventional wisdom by declaring that there was no way known we could be free of charge and hope to live entirely off advertising income; so we then opted for a subscription-paid model. Time has

vindicated us to this extent — no one today any longer believes that quality journalism can be sustained on the net purely from advertising revenue. *Salon* no longer believes that; *The Wall Street Journal* no longer believes it. I firmly believe that online newsletters, nourished by a loyal subscription base, will be revived as an important outlet for vigorous journalism in the future.

But for many years yet to come, one of the most effective ways of marketing journalistic heavyweights and generating revenue for them may well be to publish something that looks like an undernourished *Bulletin*, a selection of their online material in printed form — a kind of *Readers Digest* for easy reading on the increasingly congested public and private transport systems. These booklets, published maybe daily or less frequently, will have familiar names like the *Melbourne Age* or indeed the *New York Times* and will be the last vestiges of the great newspaper tradition. Such is the future of news analysis.

Lifestyle publishers, similarly, will no longer be newspaper companies or

magazine companies or book companies. They will be all of the above, and more. In some ways the most significant harbinger of the future in this field of endeavour is Matt Handbury's Murdoch Magazines company, which today itself produces the television show *Better Homes & Gardens*, as well as the magazine of that name. His company produces the magazines *Family Circle* and *Marie Claire*, but also books under those imprints.

As newspapers run out of advertising income, they will no longer be able to afford to provide magazines like *Domain* or *Drive* free of charge to their lucky readers, but they may be tempted to develop these titles a little more aggressively and push them out into the marketplace as paid publications. Conversely, some of today's magazine companies will produce some of their output on newsprint so as to give them lower and more attractive cover prices. The new owners of Pacific Magazines, for example, may well be tempted to produce *New Idea* as an inexpensive colour newspaper — looking more like the *Wentworth Courier* or *Melbourne Weekly* than a traditional magazine. The problem for *Woman's Day* and *New Idea* in the last few years has been that their cover prices have shot up so dramatically that they have become considered purchases when they should, by rights, be impulse buys. As coloured newspapers they might yet regain their former glories.

Clearly what I am suggesting is that, in the near future, we will not be defining print companies by the physical appearance of their output but by the subject matter they specialise in. They will become truly multimedia

specialists in reportage or news commentary or lifestyle or whatever. And their domain will not merely be print but also broadcasting and online, including datacasting whenever the incoming Beazley Government [a foregone conclusion pre-Tampa — Ed.] manages to find a way of allowing this interesting new medium to take its rightful place in the pantheon.

Books, of course, will continue to be written by the journalists and writers associated with the kinds of media companies I have already described. And there will be other enterprises which specialise in literature and education, the two great heartlands of the traditional book business. But there's no doubt that the world of book publishing is changing very rapidly, even as we talk about it.

Last year Jason Epstein wrote an influential essay in the *New York Review of Books* called 'The Rattle of Pebbles', which he subsequently expanded into a book called *Book Business: Publishing Past Present and Future*. I am sure many of you are aware of these contributions to publishing futurology; if you aren't, I recommend them to you even if I don't agree with all their conclusions. Epstein, of course, is and was a distinguished editor and publisher, having joined Random House in 1958. When I myself began in book publishing I used to visit New York twice a year, in regular forays to secure Australian rights on promising American titles; when I met Epstein at that time New York publishing was highly prestigious and he was one of its notables.

For an old man Jason Epstein is surprisingly upbeat about the future and about the impact of the net on books. Perhaps his boldest prediction is that ultimately the big-name authors will no longer be published by mainstream publishing houses at all.

With considerable passion, Epstein writes: 'Such name-brand best-selling authors as Tom Clancy, Michael Crichton, Stephen King, Dean Koontz, and John Grisham, whose faithful readers are addicted to their formulaic melodramas, no more need publishers to edit and publicize their books than Nabisco needs Julia Child to improve and publicize Oreos. Name-brand authors need publishers only to print and advertise their books and distribute them to the chains and other mass outlets, routine tasks that all publishers manage equally well.'

Epstein believes that the only factor sustaining the current system is the humungous royalty advances being shelled out by big publishers to these name-brand authors. He writes: 'To retain these powerful authors publishers already forego much of their normal profit, or incur severe losses, by paying royalty guarantees far greater than can be recouped from sales. As a

The net in time will come to be little more than a reader's nightmare, even if it is a writer's heaven.

result publishers' profits from books by these best-selling authors, if there are any after the unearned portion of the guarantee has been deducted from revenues, often amount to little more than a modest fee for services. Given the negligible value that publishers add to these assured best sellers in today's brand-driven marketplace, these fees are a fair reward.'

Epstein reminds us that several name-brand film stars, including Leonardo DiCaprio, Kevin Costner, and Robin Williams, have recently left their agents and hired business managers to create their own production companies rather than sign with studios or independent producers on traditional terms. These celluloid superstars, in a mood not dissimilar to that of brand-name authors, feel they don't need anyone to produce them or to direct them or to show them how to act. Epstein predicts a day when the publishing conglomerates tire of overpaying their star performers and these writers opt out of the system, hiring independent contractors as production consultants, publicity agencies, and distribution services.

For the record, I agree with Epstein's prediction. So we are entering a world in which newspapers will have to survive without classified advertising and book publishers will have to survive without Bryce Courtenay or Harry Potter. What a challenge. In truth we are going to see emerge not only a new kind of publisher for

journalism but a new kind of publisher for imaginative writing.

Cyberspace is already awash with new books emanating from major publishing houses. But there is also a huge and bewildering range of non-mainstream publishing of new E-book titles going on, ranging from vanity- to self-publishing, i.e. ranging from the author paying someone else to digitise their manuscript and host it on the web to the author foregoing normal royalties and advances, either accepting no royalty whatsoever or being paid a modern-day version of a share of profits, actually just like authors did in the 19th century. One common thread in all this frenetic activity is an overwhelming desire to dispense altogether with publishing editors. Either through authorial hubris or a desire to save money, the text as written by the author is the text that appears on screen. There is, for example, the new joint venture between the Australian Society of Authors and a company called IPR Systems Pty Ltd. This site offers Australian authors the opportunity to throw off their shackles and liberate themselves from those pesky publishers once and for all. RMIT is involved with Commonground.com.au, which seems to be a semi-commercial venture along the same lines.

Discussing this phenomenon, Jason Epstein writes: 'The World Wide Web offers access to any would-be writer who may or may not have something to say and know how to say it. Several literary websites that have so far emerged are in effect vanity presses, willing to publish anything, regardless of quality, provided the author pays. It is highly improbable that from this clutter works of value will emerge.'

But my own view is rather different to Epstein's. His belief that nothing of lasting worth will emerge from the cacophony of the web makes it sound as though publishers are, and always have been, infallible and totally prescient. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are many notorious examples of great works that have struggled to find a publisher. To mention only one of them: as some of you will remember, the comedic novel, *A Confederacy of Dunces*, was written by John Kennedy Toole in the early sixties, when he was only 16. He tried unsuccessfully to get his novel published

The future of the knowledge society
Continued on page 21

Dates *for your* Diary

- Mar 13** AusSI NSW Branch AGM/dinner, New Hong Kong Restaurant, 44 Macleay Street, Potts Point, opposite the Landmark Parkroyal Hotel (9356 8481). See Noticeboard for details regarding transport and RSVP. 6.30 pm
- Mar 15** UNSW one-day workshop: The Hidden Web: quality information on the Internet. Details <http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/>
- Apr 5** Society of Editors (NSW) monthly meeting, Mechanics School of Arts, 280 Pitt Street, Sydney, 6.30 for 7.00 pm. RSVP to 02 9294 4999 (voicemail) or email mmripear@ozemail.com.au by 1 April
- Apr 9** Vic Branch tour of Victorian Parliamentary Library with Bruce Davidson. Bookings to Jenny Restarick, tel/fax 03 9528 2539 or email jenny.restarick@csiro.au to get your name on the short list.
- May 3, 10 & 17** Introduction to Book Indexing at UNSW. Details <http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/>
- May 24** Computer-aided Indexing at UNSW. Details <http://cpd.sistm.unsw.edu.au/>
- May 25-26** ACT Region Branch Professional Development Weekend at Ranelagh House, Robertson, NSW. Contact ACT Branch for more information.

Publication of Wheatley Facsimile Editions

The Society of Indexers has published a limited run of facsimile editions of Henry B. Wheatley's books *How to Make an Index* and *What is an Index?* This is to celebrate the centenary of the publication of *How to Make an Index*.

These delightful books have much to offer. The facsimile editions are a pleasure to handle. They are an excellent read, without Victorian fustiness. Wheatley's writing is direct, engrossing and entertaining, with much of pertinence to the modern indexer. He was the prime mover behind the Index Society, founded in 1877, which later merged with the British Record Society. At that time major works were published without indexes, and those indexes that did appear were often of a lamentable standard. The Wheatley Medal, for an outstanding index, awarded each year jointly by the Library Association and the Society of Indexers, is named in his honour.

'These two books offer pearls of wisdom that are as authentic and useful today as when they were first printed', *The Indexer*, 1959

'... here is the very spirit in which we all work brought to life, illuminated by wit and humour ... and packed with reminders of how to do the job well', *Sidelights*, 2001

- Wheatley, H.B. *What is an Index? A Few Notes on Indexes and Indexers*. First published 1879, Longmans, Green & Co: London, for the Index Society. 132 pp.
2002 facsimile: price £15 (UK), £17 (overseas)
 - Wheatley, H.B. *How to make an index*. First published 1902, Elliot Stock: London. 236 pp.
2002 facsimile: price £18 (UK), £20 (overseas).
- Both books for £30 (UK), £34 (overseas). All prices include postage and packing.

but ultimately, depressed by his failure to do so, he committed suicide in 1969. It was in fact only through the tenacity of his mother — who, like the very best kind of legendary good mums never wavered in her faith in her son's work — that this book ultimately found its deserved audience. *A Confederacy of Dunces* won the 1981 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, twelve years after the author's tragic death.

Much rubbish and some really good books will be self-published on the net. But the net in time will come to be little more than a reader's nightmare, even if it is a writer's heaven. Browsing the web will be like visiting the largest and most chaotic bookshop you can imagine — one where the books are piled high but not organised according to any known principle. Something like Bob Gould's Third World Bookshop in Sydney during its heyday. Soon there will arise the need for someone to take readers by the hand and guide them through this forbiddingly lavish literary smorgasbord.

Publishers in the past have been the traditional gatekeepers between all that is written and all that is available to a wider public. That intermediary role may well continue in a new way. In time, in my view, a new kind of book publisher will arise — one who will, free of charge, act as a kind of search engine to this vast inchoate universe of immaculately conceived literary works floating around in cyberspace. Certain publishers will become touchstones for their ability to recommend works, to fossick through this awesome literary garbage mountain and to point their reader-clients in interesting directions. To recompense them for their work in 'discovering' and promoting authors' works that have already been posted on the web, these new-age publishers will obtain an option to publish such works subsequently in print. Such publishers may themselves post on the web excerpts from some of the manuscripts they receive, to test online reaction, as a kind of latter-day poison-tasting.

As an example of how the online world may in the future create real opportunities for the world of print, the commentator Steve Ditlea, in an article last July in *Technology Review*,

provides an interesting case study. He writes: 'The power of e-books as a promotional medium has probably best been demonstrated by Melisse Shapiro, who writes under the nom de plume M.J. Rose. Her first novel, *Lip Service*, an erotically charged thriller, was rejected by a dozen book publishers for being too steamy for the chain bookstores. She opted to publish from her own Web site, offering digital downloads for \$10 or photocopies of the manuscript for \$20. Even when the password for her e-book was stolen and posted online, resulting in 1,000 pirated downloads, she managed to receive 150 paid orders for e-books and 500 orders for photocopies. She invested in printing 3,000 copies to help create buzz; at one point, it was the 123rd best-selling title on Amazon.com. Following her online blitz, Doubleday Direct picked up *Lip Service* for its mail-order book clubs and soon after, Pocket Books signed up print rights in hardcover and paperback.' The experience of Melisse Shapiro may yet provide a useful paradigm for the future.

Richard Walsh's paper on 'The future of the knowledge society' will be concluded in the April issue.

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From the literature

Glenda Browne

ASAIB Newsletter *Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers*, no. 13, October 2001

This issue mentions the ASAIB Award for Indexing and Bibliography, and training planned for 2002 (back-of-book indexing and periodical indexing, in Pretoria). It then gives short biographical notes on two members (I always find this sort of stuff interesting), and a report on a conference on 'Colonial and post-colonial cultures of the book' (the follow-up conference to which will be held in Australia in 2003). One of the resolutions was to start compiling resources for writing a history of the book in South Africa.

When I visited South Africa in 1977 the rand and the Australian dollar were equivalent. The last time I heard, there were four rand to the dollar (so we are not the worst off when it comes to currency problems). This, along with newly stimulated interest in Africa has meant that it is very difficult for South African libraries to purchase rare books and keep them in the country. At a Sotheby's Book Auction in September 2001 (reported on page 6) Richard Burton's *Zanzibar* (1872) had an estimated price of R 12,000 and sold for R 45,000. A French history of African birds sold for R 460,000. Australian libraries have had similar problems, and there was a time when the State Libraries and National Library pushed prices up, competing with each other for the same items. They now try to coordinate purchases better.

nfais newsletter vol. 43 no.12, December 2001

Articles include:

- The 'unique challenge' of art abstracting, by Sarah Charles
- Digitization and PAIS International, by Debra Brown-Spruill
- Planning the ATLA Serials Project, by Dennis Norlin

The Genealogist vol. 10, no. 4, December 2001

Family history is now the biggest hobby internationally, having just overtaken stamp collecting.

p.158 *The Genealogist* thanks their 340 volunteers and estimates that at least 2800 voluntary people hours contributed to the recent re-arrangement of the library.

p.170 As always, a huge proportion of the magazine involves indexes. Karen Stewart notes that the First World War Red Cross Wounded and Missing records have been indexed. They are available at the Australian War Memorial reading room, and there are plans to add them to the website.

p.170 The State Library of Victoria has commissioned a report on the digitising of local picture collections and development of a searchable database of local records to enable them to be accessed through the Internet.

p.174 Newspaper indexes are useful for family historians, and can be used to find reports of murders (hopefully not), accidents, and inquests, as well as births, deaths, and marriages. Many are unpublished, and are held in libraries and genealogical societies. A list of known indexes is held by the State Library of Victoria in the Newspaper Reading Room. Another list, *Specialist Indexes in Australia: A Genealogist's Guide* is available online at www.judywebster.gil.com.au/si-98.html.

p.176 Alternative spellings are a problem when indexing names. Pity the Fflaye family, who have to search under Ffley, Fflay, Flay, Flaye, Flea and Fleay!

p.182 Has a small ad for AusSI titled 'Need an index?' (This ad has been placed in a number of publications over the last few months, and anecdotal evidence suggests that it has raised AusSI's profile and led to offers of work to AusSI members).

Ancestor

vol. 25, no. 8, December 2001

p.4 Most genealogical indexes are finding aids – they tell you where relevant information is held, but then leave you to go and retrieve it yourself. A new CD of Marine Births, Deaths and Marriages contains 6200 index entries, as well as 3380 digital images of the original pages in the marine and general registers. There is no need to buy the certificates of the marine records, as all images are contained on the CD-ROM. In addition, any personal papers that accompanied the registration are also digitised. This includes lists of belongings and passports. The index also includes additional fields for searching, including spouse and marriage place.

pp.7-9 This three-page article by David Weatherill provides information on the archives and records of the National Archives of Australia (www.naa.gov.au), with screen shots of RecordSearch.

Offpress **Newsletter of the Society of Editors (Queensland) Inc.** November 2001

This issue contains two entertaining pages of editors' letters to Santa. Wishes include well written manuscripts with a budget to allow for fantastic artwork, a big desk, acceptance of a novel for publication ('Ah, dreams'), the Oxford English Dictionary ('that's one big stocking'), 'a large box of assorted extra seconds, minutes, hours, days and months ... to dip into whenever the job on hand seems to be taking up far more time than I expected', 'a couple of small regular jobs', 'an upgrade for my personal memory', 'Oh, and peace and goodwill throughout the earth!'

Could be fun to do one of these for indexers next year.

American Libraries November 2001

p.60 Biblio-Hotel is a boutique 60-room hotel in New York aimed

at booklovers. Each hotel floor and room is classified by a Dewey Classification number. For example, law and other social sciences are on the 3rd floor, dinosaurs are on the 5th, and fairytales on the 8th. Rooms contain books on subjects relevant to their classification number. The nightly turndown service includes chocolates wrapped in quotations about libraries. With rates ranging from US\$265 it is obviously not aimed at those on librarian's salaries.

SHARP

www.sharpweb.org

The Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing (SHARP) has a website with links to lots of resources at www.sharpweb.org.

Keywords

Bulletin of the American Society of Indexers

vol. 9, no. 6,

November/December 2001

pp.165-167 Nancy Humphrey's letter to the editor discusses innovative approaches to web indexing, including the use of tables for display.

pp.170-175 is a transcription of Seth Maislin's TJ Taxonomist Show which aired on the Lycos TalkRadio Finance and Business Channel on 9 April 2001. Audience members asked questions via microphone or keyboard, and Seth spoke his responses. Topics covered indexing in general and XML standards.

pp.176, 185 How many indexing-related online discussion groups do you know of? This article in *Keywords* lists 28, headed by Index-L, and followed by those for specific areas (countries and regions), subject specialities, formats (eg database indexing) and software used. IndexCafe exists to strengthen social bonds, and IndexBar is similar, but is a no-holds barred forum for opinionated folk, where polite professionalism can't be expected, but is allowed. Unfortunately, discussion groups come and go, and WINDMAIL, for web indexers, is now defunct. I think most people found that web issues were best discussed in the broad forum of Index-L.

pp.178-179 Fred Leise (an information architect who has worked with

Argus Associates) discusses 'Using faceted classification to assist indexing'. He says that using faceted classification can help you analyse your text and make sure you capture all relevant items. A list of facets relevant to the book you are indexing (for a software manual the list might include operations, commands and shortcuts) can stimulate ideas when you are having trouble with a certain passage in a book, and can be used as a checklist to ensure exhaustivity of indexing.

pp.182-183 Pilar Wyman reviewed the HTML Indexing course (now called Web Site Indexing Course) run online by Kevin Broccoli (www.bim.net). The course starts with an optional section on HTML, and includes work with HTML/Prep, HTML Indexer, and HTML Help. Although she had a few suggestions for improvements (such as the need for more student-to-student communication), Pilar was positive and concluded: 'This was a worthwhile course; I now know how to do it, and that I can do it, if need be.'

Uniken in review 2001

Alumni edition. UNSW

pp. 22-23 'Evidence from the killing fields' reports on the work by Helen Jarvis and others on a Yale University documentation project for the Cambodian Genocide Program (CGP). This research will be important in trials of those responsible for crimes of the Pol Pot era, and the databases are now available on the Internet (www.cgp.sistm.unsw.edu.au) and CD-ROM. 'The documentation project has had two main activities — to identify and collect material from around the world, and to organise and catalogue it. Four databases were developed — bibliographic, biographic, scanned images, and geographic.' The CGP model is being extended to help people from Bougainville, Indonesia and East Timor, and Rwanda.

Calendar

Newsletter of Copyright Agency Limited
December 2001

p.6 'What's the deal with moral rights?' gives information on the three moral rights of Australian creators: 'the right of attribution of

authorship; the right not to have authorship of their work falsely attributed; and the right of integrity of authorship', which protects creators' works from being treated in a derogatory manner. This could possibly be relevant to the mistreatment of indexes (eg severe cuts without thought for the overall structure of the index). There are a number of defences to infringement, including 'relevant industry practice'. For more information see www.copyright.org.au.

Sidelights

Newsletter of the Society of Indexers

Issue 4, Winter 2001

p.3 The newly published *Indexing: The Manual of Good Practice* by Pat Booth, published by KG Saur, is available to members of AusSI for US\$116/58 pounds (a saving of about 2 pounds). Order forms are available at www.socind.demon.co.uk/ordform.pdf.

p.10 announces the new indexing anthology *Indexers and Indexes in Fact and Fiction*, edited by Hazel Bell, available from the British Library (ISBN 0 7123 4729 1) for 16 pounds (plus overseas postage, probably).

p.18 announces the winners of the Society of Authors and the Royal Society of Medicine Book Awards 2001. The index to one of the two main prize winners was compiled 'in-house by the typesetter, with help from the authors.'

p.19 notes changes in publishers — every issue about 10 publishers seem to be taken over, or change hands. For example, Little, Brown is now to be known as Time Warner Books UK, with Little, Brown retained as the hardcover imprint.

pp.20-21 is a biography of Ken Bake-well. Along with G. Norman Knight, he is a holder of SI's triple crown, having won the Wheatley Medal (for his index to the Anglo-American cataloguing rules, crucial in library descriptive cataloguing) and the Carey award, and been President of the society.

pp.24-25 reports on a meeting of the IIS (Institute of Information Scientists) at which four people spoke about the implementation of taxonomies (eg thesauruses) in their organisations (eg the British Council and the BBC).

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