Newsletter

John Simkin

Congratulations to AusSI's New Life Member

At a celebratory dinner held in Rossini's Ristorante, Glenferrie Road, Malvern on Tuesday 14 May 2002, Vice President Alan Walker presented John Simkin with a Life Membership Medal of the Society, and an inscribed certificate.

Close to thirty of John's friends, family, and colleagues, gathered to pay tribute to him at this special event, and we were all well-rewarded by John's speech in reply.

It was a most enjoyable evening of food, wine and conviviality, with many people catching up with former workmates of past years.

The Victorian Branch had asked the National Committee if we could host this function in Melbourne where we fellow Victorians could be present and share in the importance of this award. Our thanks to the Executive Committee for supporting us in this request and to Alan Walker for representing our new National President, Lynn Farkas, on this occasion.

Jenny Restarick
President, Victorian Branch

Background

The Society's constitution provides for the award of Honorary Life Membership in recognition of outstanding service to indexing and/or to the Society. Honorary Life Members have full membership rights without being required to pay membership fees.

John Simkin was elected unanimously as an Honorary Life Member at the Annual General Meeting of the Australian Society of Indexers on 26 February 2002. John was nominated by Jean Hagger and seconded by Joyce Gillespie, who provided the following testimonials. The nomination was endorsed unanimously at the meeting of the National Committee on 16 January 2002.

Testimonial from Jean Hagger, Honorary Life Member

John Simkin has been a member of the Australian Society of Indexers since its inception in April 1976. Prior to this, he had been active in making arrangements for the termination of the Society of Indexers in Australia and its re-forming as the Australian Society of Indexers.

John has held many roles in AusSI, as President, Vice-President and a committee member, a member of the Panel of Assessors and the judging committee for the AusSI Medal. Undoubtedly, his greatest contribution has been as the founding editor of the Society's Newsletter, the position which he held from December 1976 to December 1980. The importance of this was clearly stated by the President, Peter Dawe, in his Annual Report of 1980:

'Since 1976, when Mr John Simkin devised the first issue of the new series, the Newsletter has been the life blood of our dispersed membership.'

Statistics at the time list members in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia.

The Newsletter carried articles of interest, often the text of papers delivered at the Society's meetings in Melbourne, short items giving notice of events in the Society's activities, and — perhaps the most important of all — official communications such as the Annual Report and lists of members. The production was simple and elegant and, as Peter Dawe said, it was the life blood of the dispersed membership. We really felt as if we belonged to an active professional organisation.

John carried out this work, singlehandedly, with a devotion for which both present and past members should be profoundly grateful.

What's inside

PO Box R598, Royal Exchange NSW 1225

Testimonial from Joyce Gillespie, Honorary Life Member

Having joined the Society at its inaugural meeting in 1976, John certainly meets the length of membership criterion for nomination as an Honorary Life Member of the Australian Society of Indexers.

Evidence of outstanding service to the Society includes the following:

❏ John established and was editor of the Newsletter vols 1–3 (1976–79).

❏ He was President in 1983, 1987 and 1996, and Vice-President in 1977 and 1988.

❏ As well as those executive positions, John was a member of the National Committee until 1996, including a term as Chairman of the Panel of Assessors in 1990–91, and from 1997 to date has been a member of the Victorian Branch Committee.

❏ In addition to his active service on committees, John has represented our Society on a number of occasions at the (UK) Society of Indexers' annual conferences, often presenting a paper on the Australian indexing scene.

John is a Registered Indexer, well known for a wide-ranging subject coverage, including fiction and compilations of indexes to books published for the publishing industry.

Within the Society, John's special interest has always been in the education, qualification and accreditation status of indexers, and he has written a number of articles in the Newsletter raising these topics for a wide ranging discussion among members.

I consider John to be a very worthy recipient of an Honorary Life Membership.

Extracts from covering letter from Jenny Restarick, President, Victorian Branch

On behalf of the committee of the Victorian Branch, I wish to submit a proposal for the conferring of Life Membership of the Australian Society of Indexers on John E. Simkin.

I attach letters of support from two of the Society's Life Members, Joyce Gillespie and Jean Hagger.

A further role John has undertaken in the past few years, which is not referred to in the letters of support from Jean and Joyce, is his role as Chairperson of the Judging Panel for the Society's annual Medal awards, since

1998. He has also been invited to participate in the recently constituted Education Sub-Committee and is looking forward to contributing to that issue.

John's attendance at, and participation in, international conferences throughout the years helped form strong alliances and friendships amongst indexers and indexing bodies and our overseas colleagues.

Enclosed also is a list of works by John, compiled from literary, library science and indexing databases.

As it was the late Josephine McGovern's suggestion that this honour be proposed for John, it would be a fine way of remembering her quiet but thoughtful interest in the Society and its pursuit of excellence.

John E. Simkin: List of Works
Books

Adult Author Catalogue, 1981, compiled by John Simkin and Marion Piper, South Oakleigh, Vic., Minterlib Co-operative Store, 1981.

Australian Books for Australian Schools: All In-print Fact and Fiction Titles for Children, Schools, Parents & Teachers, edited by John E. Simkin, Port Melbourne, Vic., D.W. Thorpe, 1993.

Cooperative Store Catalogues, compiled by John E. Simkin, Bentleigh, Vic., City of Moorabbin Library, for Municipal Inter-Library Committee (Victoria), 1984.

Cooperative Store Sequels List, compiled by John E. Simkin, Bentleigh, Vic., City of Moorabbin Library, for Municipal Inter-Library Committee (Victoria), 1982.

Education and the Library: Papers of a Workshop Held at Hamilton, July 25–26, 1964, edited by John E. Simkin, Melbourne, Library Association of Australia, 1965.

Subject Guide to Australian Business, Commerce & Law Books, edited by John E. Simkin, Port Melbourne, Vic., D.W. Thorpe, 1992.

Subject Guide to Australian Children's Books in Print, edited by John E. Simkin, Port Melbourne, Vic., D.W. Thorpe, 1991.
— 2nd ed., 1993.
— 3rd ed., 1995.
— 4th ed., 1999.

Subject Guide to Australian Scientific, Technical & Medical Books, edited by John E. Simkin, Port Melbourne, Vic., D.W. Thorpe, 1993.

The Whole Story: 3000 Years of Sequels and Sequences, compiled by John E. Simkin, Port Melbourne, Vic., D.W. Thorpe, 1996.
— 2nd ed. 1998.

Journal articles and conference papers

'Australian Society of Indexers Canberra meeting, 9 August 1983', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 49–50, November 1983.

'Code of practice for indexers', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 2–4, March 1996.

'The employment of librarians and library technicians: issues, problems, possibilities', in *Libraries in Society: Proceedings of the 19th Biennial Conference of the Library Association of Australia, 1997*, Sydney, Library Association of Australia, 1997, pp. 186–189.

'Ethics: the role of societies in maintaining professional integrity', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 25, no. 8, p. 79, September 2001.

'Fellowships and Associateships: Australian Society of Indexers', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 3–4, January/February 1997.

'Future educational and training needs of indexers', *The Indexer*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 19–20, April 1992.

'Indexing in "How to write a book" books', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 53–54, November 1985.

'Order out of chaos: conference of the Bibliographical Society of Australia and New Zealand, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, September 30 and October 1, 1993', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 17, no. 10, pp. 3–4, November/December 1993.

'Professionalism: professional standards for indexers', *The Indexer*, vol. 20, no. 4, pp. 178–181, October 1997.

'Related skills — indexing and bibliography', in *The August Indexer: Proceedings from the Second International Conference of the Australian Society of Indexers, Friday August 27 to Sunday August 29, 1999, Hobart, Tasmania*, edited by M. Findlay, Melbourne, Australian Society of Indexers, 2000, pp. 112–114.

'Talk from the new President: a future for AusSI, *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 20–24, May 1983.

'Victorian Branch report', *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter*, vol. 22, no. 3, p. 26, April 1998.