

Melbourne Indexers Bulletin

No. 14, August 2016

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August meeting

Editing the AusSI Newsletter Index

Background

Back in February it was decided to focus on indexing the first 20 years of the ANZSI Newsletter. This covers all issues of the *Society of Indexers in Australia Newsletter* and the early years of the *Australian Society of Indexers Newsletter* covering 1973 to 1992. At that stage only 27 issues needed to be indexed to complete the 20 years. Now, thanks to various volunteers, all the issues have been indexed and the various years are being edited and merged to form the first draft of the 20 year index.

While the style sheet developed helped shape the indexes in a similar way, with eleven indexers involved, there is some variation. As the 'go to' person for the project I made some decisions on how things should be handled. I wanted to check the decisions were reasonable and seek guidance on how some other things should be handled to ensure consistency. The August meeting provided a great opportunity to discuss these items and reach consensus on a preferred way to enter things in the index.

Here is a sample of the sort of things discussed:

- Early issues had the talks written up separately with separate page numbers. Should these be treated as supplements? For example as 1973(4):S1–4. This was agreed to be the best approach.
- 'The' is typically ignored in filing, so 'The Age' is filed under A. Should it be listed as 'The Age' or 'Age, The'? 'The Age' was the preferred option.
- Similarly should 'A' and 'An' at the beginning of titles be ignored in filing? Yes, but there wasn't a clear majority.
- Should location qualifiers be added to Newspapers? No.
- Is the position title 'Vice-President' or 'Vice President'? 'Vice-President'.
- Secretaries and Treasurers in early years were 'Honorary Secretary' and 'Honorary Treasurer'. Should 'Honorary' be in the title? No.
- What do you call financial reports? AusSI financial statements, AusSI Treasurer's reports or AusSI

statement of income and expenditure? The first option.

- Early issues frequently had snippets from book reviews with comments on the index, or perhaps lamenting the fact the book had no index. It was decided to just list the book titles under the main heading 'index review quotations'. The list already has nearly 300 titles and more years are still to be merged. It was decided, when compiling the final version of the index, these should be listed in a separately linked file. They may then be grouped into similar groups as used in *The Indexer* section indexes reviewed.
- Names are entered as listed and will be edited later. It was decided that second initials should be added, where used, and where no first name is known a title should be added to the initial.
- As more years are merged variation in subject headings appear. For example AusSI

indexing courses and AusSI training courses.

- Subheadings sometimes highlight a good main heading and hence double posting required.
- The word 'quotations' turned out to be a tricky subject heading with five different uses. There are articles on indexing books of quotations, quotations about indexing (i.e. the process), quotations about indexes, quotations from key works (such as Shakespeare) and quotations referring to pricing.

These are the sort of things you may have to decide when indexing a newsletter, but it is not often they are discussed as a group. I found the discussion and feedback very useful and have subsequently updated the style guide to reflect the decisions made. Thank you to all involved.

Mary Russell

SOCIETY OF INDEXERS IN AUSTRALIA

All correspondence regarding The Society of Indexers (England), The Society of Indexers in Australia and the *Newsletter* should be addressed to H. Godfrey Green, 35 Rosedale Road, Glen Iris, Victoria 3146.
Phone: 26 6901, ext. 166; A.H. 25 3314.

*Absente auxilio perquirimus undique frustra,
Sed nobis ingene indicis auxilium est.*

NEWSLETTER

NUMBER FIVE

FREE TO MEMBERS

FEBRUARY 1974

First masthead of the Newsletter



ROYAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF VICTORIA INC.

239 A'Beckett Street, Melbourne 3000

5 August 2016

Ms Mary Coe, President Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers
PO Box 43 Lawson, NSW 2783

Dear Ms Coe,

I am writing to you as Vice President of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria (RHSV) and Chair of its Publications Committee. The RHSV, now 105 years old, is a voluntary organisation acting as umbrella to over 300 historical societies in Victoria. It is also Melbourne's own historical society.

The RHSV has published the *Victorian Historical Journal* under various names since 1911, making it one of the oldest, continuous historical journals published in Australia. It is devoted to Victoria's history and is published twice a year. In recent years issues contain 6-8 articles, half a dozen book reviews and is close to 200 pages. It is still issued in hard copy, but is also now available on the web through the State Library of Victoria (1911+), INFORMIT (1994+), and the WEB of Science (2015+). The *VHJ* has been indexed since its inception. From the 1954 this task was undertaken by the late John D. Adams who lectured at RMIT for many years in librarianship. John indexed the journal from 1954 until 2015. His passing late last year was a great loss to the RHSV. The index in hard copy until 1999, is now available on the RHSV website <http://collections.historyvictoria.com.au/rhsvdatabases/journal.htm>

I would appreciate your assistance in finding an indexer to replace John Adams. It is a difficult request for being a voluntary organisation we are unable to pay for this service. The production and posting of the journal already stretches our finances. Therefore we are seeking a special person who is interested in carrying on this century-old tradition, which provides detailed access to the journal from anywhere in the country and the world. This person will enjoy free membership of our society, and if in Melbourne access to our vibrant historical community and city rooms, complimentary copies of our publications, free use of our library and archives, and access to our monthly lectures and regular exhibitions.

I welcome your kind response either by letter (care of the society's address); email to r.broome@latrobe.edu.au; or by phone to 03 9571 6652 or 0408 315 787.

Kind regards

Richard Broome

Emeritus Professor in History La Trobe University, FAHA, FRHSV

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Coles Myer archive at SLV



State Library of Victoria

Back in 2000, Coles Myer Ltd donated its archive to SLV, along with substantial financial support to assist the Library with the identification, organisation, cataloguing, and conservation of the collection. It represents a corporate history of two of Australia's most iconic corporate brands, and is an economic, social and cultural record of Australia over a 150-year period.

There are over 30,000 items in the collection, stored across 1 linear kilometre of shelving. These include share registers; minutes; reports; correspondence; speeches; catalogues; advertisements;

press cuttings; photographs; architectural drawings; film reels; video tapes; audio tapes; store fittings; clothing; and samples of wares.

SLV recently completed the big task of making the archive fully accessible to the public. This included the digitisation of 6,000 items which can be accessed through their website, as well as the creation of finding aids to items which can be accessed in person at the Library. A true gem in the digitised collection is the Colesanco staff magazine, with every issue from 1928 to 1986.

More information at:

<http://guides.slv.vic.gov.au/colesmyer>

Tips and hints

Concordance conundrum

A few months ago, a client sent me these brief indexing guidelines from a major academic publishing company:

‘The index can be prepared as a list in a word document or highlighted throughout the manuscript. Only the first instance of the term needs to be listed/highlighted. The index should include important ideas, facts, names, and terms that receive significant discussion in the text. Items that are only mentioned incidentally in the text should not be included. On average, there should be two to three index entries per page of text. By default, name and subject index are combined in one index.’

It was immediately apparent to me that following these guidelines strictly would result in a list of key terms similar to one that an author might supply to an indexer, and could hardly be called an index. I would regard it as raw material for an index, but instead of being handled by a human indexer, the publisher’s global search process thereafter moves it into concordance territory.

While the issue of topic selection associated with concordances might have been considered and partially addressed by the publisher, the automated process ensures that other features of concordances will be obvious. For example, the instruction “Only the first instance of the term needs to be listed/highlighted.”, puts paid to the creation of sub-headings and guarantees that there will be long strings of undifferentiated page references. And including “important ideas, facts, names, and terms that receive significant discussion in the text” is all well and good but unfortunately not quite that

straightforward. In academic multi-authored works where authors frequently use different terminology for the same thing, indexers have to pay special attention to grouping of information and make judicious use of cross-references.

It was disappointing to see this concordance approach adopted, but it was also discomfoting to realise that I was going to have to, at the eleventh hour, let down a valued client, whose repeat business I had hoped to retain in the future. Walking away from this “index” meant of course that I was also not able to assist my client and her co-authors by finding another indexer.

However, in having to explain why professional indexers have difficulties with concordances, I was grateful for the simple but useful explanation of why a concordance is not an index on the ANZSI website:

<https://www.anzsi.org/resources/about-indexers-and-indexing/concordance-or-index/>

The author is unknown, so if it was you, thank you! It saved me time, and it was good to have ANZSI back-up for my argument at the click of a button. I didn’t feel the need to include it, but SI also has helpful information at:

<http://www.indexers.org.uk/index.php?id=463>

My client had no trouble understanding my predicament, nor the inferior result that could be expected. Happily, I haven’t lost her, and will shortly be working on her next book, this time with a different publisher.

Nikki Davis

Upcoming meetings

Next meeting – What was your most challenging index?

What was your most challenging index? What aspect of the job made it challenging? Perhaps it was your first job, the clients were difficult or the book itself was massive or intellectually challenging. Come and share your experiences. Who knows what will be discussed?

Date: Wednesday 5 October

Time: 6:00 for 6:30 pm

Venue: Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew

Followed by dinner at Café La Q

<p>Wednesday 7 December How are books constructed?</p> <p>6:00 for 6:30 pm Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall, Kew</p> <p>7:45 pm Meal at Café La Q</p>	<p>Have you ever made your own book? After a brief discussion on the process of how a book is bound there will be a chance to make your own simple booklets from sheets of A4 paper.</p>
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Contributions to *Melbourne Indexers Bulletin* are welcome at melbourneindexers@gmail.com