I cannot tell you how honoured (as well as diffident) I feel to be addressing you as Chairman of the Society of Indexers. Now that we are in the sixth year of our existence some of you may be unaware of how the Society came to be formed. I trust you will forgive my having to use a good deal of first person singular.

In 1956 when I retired from the Civil Service I had been a free-lance indexer—on and off—for over thirty years, although I can assure you that I feel pretty ashamed when I look again at some of my earliest untutored efforts. It then occurred to me that some such association as ours was needed, but how to set about it? Book and journal indexing has been aptly described by Mr. Collison as “a cottage industry” and at any rate I did not at that time know the name of a single other person who worked in this field. In consequence it became necessary to sound the views of other indexers by means of letters in the press. Now I feel that I have scores of indexer-friends and I count it as one of the achievements of the Society to have removed the intense feeling of solitude in which the indexer (of books and journals, at any rate) used to work. If I may be allowed to digress for a moment, this loneliness at work should be further eliminated by the publication of our list of members, which was suggested at the last A.G.M. and which the Secretary is preparing for press. This should enable members to get in touch with kindred spirits who live in the same neighbourhood.

The response to the appeal in the press was most gratifying. Letters came pouring in and several discreet luncheons at my club enabled me to find out which of my more distinguished correspondents would be willing to accept office in the projected Society. As a result we were able to call an inaugural meeting of those who had expressed interest at the end of March 1957, when some sixty enthusiasts from all parts of the country (as well as one who had flown expressly all the way from Utrecht) assembled in the rooms of the National Book League. At this meeting the Society of Indexers was formally constituted and the original officers and Council members were elected. The question of the annual rate of subscription was discussed but was very trustingly left to the Council for decision.

Three and a half months later a Special General Meeting was held, at which the Society’s Constitution and Rules were adopted. It was then reported that the Library Association and Aslib had each accepted an invitation to nominate a representative to serve on the Council, while members were also gratified to learn that the Publishers’ Association had joined the Society as an Institutional Member and had expressed their readiness at all times to receive any representations the Society might make. Of this, so far as I am aware, advantage has so far been taken only once—in connexion with the enforced anonymity of indexers. This meeting also marked the first of the discussion meetings which have since become such a prominent feature of the Society’s activities, for an interesting paper was read on “Co-ordinate Indexing” by Mr. C. W. Cleverdon, Librarian to the College of Aeronautics and Vice-Chairman of Aslib.
Meanwhile the Council had become busy and had set up an Editorial Board for *The Indexer*, Panel Committees and a "Non-literary" (now called "Documentary and Archives") Indexing Committee. This reminds me of the fact that the majority of our members (at present) consists of indexers of books and journals and so we have perhaps tended to concentrate overmuch on their problems and possibly to neglect the interests of the documentary indexers. Now, since practically every Government department and nearly all the larger industrial concerns have some sort of a central registry, this latter class represents a vast and almost untapped field of indexers, and I feel that it is high time that the Society acted to a greater extent on their behalf and endeavoured to recruit them as members. At any rate we have made a start by having a discussion meeting early this year on Indexing in Government Central Registries and by including in our third Training Course at North-Western Polytechnic an additional lecture on "Documentary Indexing".

Since those early days about which I have been speaking, the Society has achieved a great deal. It published in 1959 a report on the very thorny problems of the remuneration of indexers, and this report is quite shortly due for revision to bring it up to date in accordance with modern requirements. The Society has set up a chain of Corresponding Members in various parts of the world. It has been the subject of two leading articles, both highly laudatory, in *The Times*. It has arranged for the holding of three Training Courses, the first in 1958 at University College, London, the other two at the North-Western Polytechnic. The first was confined to members of the Society, the others have been open to all who could afford the very modest fee. At the beginning of 1961, in conjunction with Aslib, the Society staged a One-day Conference on Better Indexes for Technical Literature in the Connaught Rooms. This was thronged and I for one found it thoroughly exciting. Under two able editors the Society has regularly produced *The Indexer* each half-year and I think you will agree that in its present form *The Indexer* stands up well if compared with the journal of any similar association.

Again, during the past three years there have throughout been two members of the Society sitting on the B.S.I. Committee which is concerned in producing a British Standard of Indexing. A draft of their report should be in your hands by the end of this month and it will then be up to members to point out to the Secretary any alterations or additions or other improvements they think ought to be incorporated. These will be carefully considered by the Council before submitting a revised version of the draft to the B.S.I.

On invitation the Society produced and widely distributed *Standards for Indexes to Learned and Technical Journals*, largely the work of Mr. John Thornton, the present editor of *The Indexer*. During the past three or four winters the Society has held monthly discussion meetings on all manner of subjects connected with indexing. The chosen speaker has invariably been an expert in his field and the subsequent debates have always been lively and stimulating. Above all, what is perhaps the Society's most important function, it has supplied to inquiring authors and publishers the names of suitable indexers for specialized works. Up to the present some 160 such requests have been met—it is believed with satisfactory results. Many a member has formed an abiding association with some particular
publishing house following a first introduction by the Secretary in this way. The Council have recently approved a circular letter to be sent to publishers to remind them of this service and elicit their interest.

I have mentioned only some of the many activities in which the Society has engaged during the past five and a half years. They are solid achievements, but we must not become complacent. Much remains to be done. I would suggest that part of the ensuing discussion be devoted to suggestions for improving the work of the Society. I can assure you that your proposals, if practical and constructive, will be carefully considered by the Council.

SOME ANCIENT INDEXES

This talk of mine is really a hotch-potch of differing topics. I am now going to ask you to listen to a few remarks on some ancient indexes which by courtesy of the Vice-Chairman I was able to inspect the other day in the British Museum Reading Room. To consult some of them I had to go to the North Room, which as any of you will know who are familiar with that wonderful haven of research is reserved for the Museum Library’s most precious possessions.

The earliest book I saw was *Provinciale seu constitutiones Angliae* by K. Lyndewoode (1525). The index, which is called “Tabula”, is, like the text, in Latin and no page numbers are provided. The entries are in alphabetical order but the whole thing is more in the nature of a table of contents. Very interesting examples are the two editions of *Urbinatis Angliae historiae* by Polydore Vergil (1546 and 1555). These are both beautifully bound and produced. The index to the latter one, which is dedicated to the reader (“Index hic tibi lector Angliae”) occupies no fewer than 37 pages and is in Latin, like the text, with an occasional Greek word. The entries are given in strictly alphabetical order, except that the Archbishops of Canterbury (under the heading “Cantuarii”) are in chronological order. What is more, not only are the page numbers shown, but also the actual line number on the page on which the entry appears. The index user is not similarly pampered nowadays, alas! The best he can hope for is such a practice as that of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which uses a small a, b, c and d after the page number to show in which of four portions of the page the reference may be found. Similar consideration for the user is shown in The history of Great Britaine by John Speed (1611), in the index (called “The Table”) of which section numbers in each chapter are given after the entries as well as the page numbers. The order again is strictly alphabetical, but I noticed that, rather oddly, the Monastery and the Battle of St. Albans both occur under Alban, whereas we should today place them under Saint. Again, Christian names come before surnames. Thus, under “B”, we have Roger Baldock, Bishop of Norwich, followed by Walter Baldock, Prior of Laund.

Then in *The naturall historie* of C. Plinius Secundus, translated by Philemon Holland (1601), we have an index entry to “Haire shedding, how to be retained and recovered” followed by 40 page numbers in solid rows. The next entry is “Haire of mans head medicinable” with 16 other “Haire” entries, the alphabetization going sadly astray.
Finally I would mention Histrio-mastix: The players scourge by William Prynne, "an Utter-Barrister of Lincolnes Inn" (1633). If the author had confined himself to the text, which is practically unreadable, and had not been so proud of his work that he thought it deserved a full and interesting index, he would not have landed himself in the pillory and been deprived of both his ears. The index comprises 40 pages, of which four are devoted to Bishop Hooper, in the course of which his sermons and letters are quoted at length. Here is a sample entry:

Bishop Hooper preached twice every day of the weeke; would have Bishops to preach once every day, would have two sermons every Lord's Day, his censure of those who complain of too much preaching, 531.

Again, we have the following reference (which I have abbreviated):

Women-Actors notorious whores . . . and dare then any Christian women be so more than whorishly impudent as to act, to speake publikely on a stage perchance in man's apparell and cut haire here proved sinful and abominable in the presence of sundry men and women? . . . O let such presidents of imprudency, of impiety be never heard of or suffered among Christians, 385.

This and numerous similar outbursts in the index (which were duly quoted by the Attorney General at the prosecution of Prynne) were scarcely very tactful at a time when the Court was addicted to the stage and Queen Maria Henrietta herself was acting in a pastoral play. These two flowery instances I have quoted seem to show that Prynne acted in accordance with the second part of a principle later laid down by "Pisanus Fraxi" (a pseudonym of H. Spencer Ashbee) in his introduction to the Index librorum prohibitorum (1877), where he has the following rather remarkable utterance: "A good book cannot be too concise—a good index can hardly be too prolix". G. Legman in his introduction to a new edition of the Index remarks: "This is of course nonsense and would end in putting Cruden's concordance above the Bible."

INDEXING FROM UNPAGED GALLEY PROOFS

Hitherto I have always stoutly asserted to inquiring authors and publishers that it is quite impossible to compile the index of a new book or journal otherwise than from its page proofs. This has now been proved fallacious, as the following example will show.

The well-known publishing house of George Newnes & Co. Ltd. required an index for a new publication, Newnes' Family lawyer, edited by the famous broadcasting barrister, Dudley Perkins. The entire work of over 800 pages had been set on galleys, which had been corrected by the authors, but owing to difficulties with the illustrations* it was impossible to proceed further and the delay was seriously interfering with the time schedule.

To avoid further delay being caused by the compilation of the index, an ingenious scheme was devised by the publisher's production manager. The indexer was handed the complete set of galley proofs, corrected but unpaged. He was required to underline in the text each indexable reference and place a serial number in the opposite margin. This number had to be repeated at the top right-hand

* Incidentally, this is the first instance I have ever encountered of a purely legal work that was illustrated.
corner of the card on which the entry was made. If it was necessary for the page number to be in bold type, a wavy underline had to be placed beneath the serial number both in the margin and on the card. As it was practically impossible to determine where the actual pages would begin or end, every separate recurrence of a topic required a fresh underlining and serial number and the making out of a fresh card, on which (in the case of sub-headings) the heading had to be repeated as well.

Another point requiring attention was the marking of the places where the reference to a particular topic began and ended, so that the page numbers in the index might read, e.g. "178-9" or "178-92" or as the case might be. This was achieved by putting in the galley margin "954 (or whatever the serial number was) starts ", followed later on (perhaps galleys away) by "954 ends ". It was not necessary to make out a fresh card for the latter marginal entry. But as there was no way of knowing where a new page would begin, "954 ends " might come often only a line or two after "954 starts ". All these things and the vast number of index cards that had to be used considerably increased, of course, the indexer's task, perhaps to three times what it would have been had normal methods been employed. But as he was working on a time basis of remuneration he had no cause for complaint.

When the index had been completed, the cards (some 6,000 of them) were arranged not in alphabetical order of entries but in numerical order, according to their serial numbers—cross-reference cards being separately collated—and were then sent, together with the galley proofs (marked as described above), to the publisher, whose staff now took over. As the paged proofs came in from the printer, a comparison of each serial number in the galley margins with the corresponding place in the paged proof enabled the correct page number to be inserted on each card. Where, as must very frequently have occurred, there were more than one card with the same page number, all but the first were rejected. The task of tracing where each continuing entry ended must have proved somewhat of a headache. All that remained for the indexer to do (apart from his final correction of the index proofs) was to go to the publisher's office and there edit and prepare for the printer the whole set of index cards, which had meanwhile been re-transferred to alphabetical order. He was able to reduce the number of cards still further by transferring additional page numbers to the card bearing the original entry.

Was the experiment a success? Well, it can be said that the publisher was pleased at receiving the complete index "copy" before the arrival of any section of page proofs from the printer. Again, complicated as this method must seem from the above description, the indexer at any rate found it comparatively simple to put into practice. Against these points must be set the general cumbrousness of the system and the greatly increased expense—the indexer's fee was probably thrice as heavy as it would normally have been—to which must be added the time consumed by the publisher's office staff in the unwonted task of adding page numbers to index cards.

My own conclusion is that while the experiment did show that it is possible to index a book from unpaged galley proofs—and this would seem to apply also
at a pinch to a text in manuscript or typescript—yet the practice is not to be recommended except in cases of extreme emergency.

It can, of course, be avoided in the case of a text-book by numbering each paragraph or small group of paragraphs in the text and inserting those paragraph numbers in place of page numbers in the index. As the late Dr. Hughes pointed out in *The Indexer* (Vol. I, No. 3, page 82), in this way the index can, if necessary, be compiled from the manuscript.

There are two distinct advantages attaching to this method of indexing from paragraph numbers. In the first place a paragraph is normally far shorter than a page and so the index-user's search (as in the case of Polydore Vergil's *History*) is rendered correspondingly more easy. In the second (and possibly more important) place, the index, not being dependent on page numbers, remains constant and requires no alteration at all whenever a new edition of a different size is produced, as for example a paper-back. Two instances of works indexed in this manner occur to me. One is Roget's *Thesaurus*. Secondly, Robert Graves always writes his appropriate books with marginal paragraph numbers, for instance his *Greek myths*.

Oddly enough I am at present engaged in indexing two more books from galley proofs, a book on Technology and one on Sociology. But there is this difference from the Newnes book. Each of these two books (like the whole series) is divided into sections, each section occupying a complete "spread", i.e. combined even- and odd-numbered page. Consequently I am able to provide page numbers for my index-entries, although as I do not know the exact dividing line between each even-numbered page and its ensuing odd-numbered page I have been instructed to use only even numbers. Thus "40" will include "41" and this will be explained in a footnote on every page of the index. In each case, the whole work is being simultaneously produced in Italy in five European languages, this method resulting in a considerable reduction of cost for each of the continental publishing houses concerned. And this brings me to the last point which I propose to inflict upon you this evening.

**PROBLEMS OF COPYRIGHT**

It may be that my index will be required for each of the translated editions. In that case, of course, the alphabetical order will have to be altered, since (to take one example) the French for "horse-power" might presumably come under "C" for *cheval-vapeur*. But has it ever occurred to any of my hearers to ask to whom the copyright of an index belongs? Normally, of course, the matter is of purely academic interest. But if other publishers are seeking to translate my index, it might be of material importance. I asked a publisher member of the Society's Council and he was emphatic that by payment of a lump sum for an index (as opposed to payment by royalties) the publisher was automatically buying all rights (including copyright) outright. "How then," I replied, "does it come about that one publisher for whom I have indexed a number of volumes, after he has sent my cheque in every case sends also for my signature a legal assignment of the copyright in my index? If he has already bought my copyright what is the point of my having to assign it to him?" I also put the point to the Newnes' editor and
his reply was: "You will know soon enough when you receive our cheque, for on it will appear the words: 'In consideration of all rights'."

I had the curiosity to look at the Copyright Acts of 1911 and 1956. There I find a literary copyright defined as "the sole right to produce or reproduce an original literary work". There must be some originality in the work—originality either in expression or arrangement—for it to enjoy the benefits of copyright. The expression "literary" does not involve any qualification of style—a directory or railway guide, or even a list of football fixtures, can be the subject of copyright—but covers any work expressed in print or writing, so long as it is substantial enough to involve some literary skill and labour of composition. Normally the author is the first owner of the copyright, the author being the person who actually "writes or compiles" the work. An indexer seems to me to satisfy all these conditions and I am under the impression that the copyright in his index remains vested in him (or her) until he has expressly assigned it. At any rate I shall endeavour to stipulate in the case of the two indexes of which I have been speaking that the copyright remains in my hands, or that I be suitably compensated for its transfer.

I feel I owe you an apology for my talks having been so scrappy and disjointed. But if any of my scraps can provide nourishment for thought I shall feel in some measure justified and amply rewarded.

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**PUNCH PULLS THE SOCIETY'S LEG**

The Society of Indexers has never signally sought press publicity, although its activities have received a couple of unsolicited testimonials in leading articles in *The Times*.

Now, however, *Punch* has entered the fray. In No. 12 of its series of Toby literary competitions competitors were asked to invent a demarcation dispute in the professions. The winning entry from Mr. E. O. Parrott included the following account of a quite fictitious (we hasten to add) occurrence:

The Chairman of the Society of Indexers said yesterday that Dictionaries, Telephone Directories, etc., were, in fact, indexes, and should not be compiled by non-members of the Society. "Let lexicographers and the Post Office join our Society. Not that they're qualified to join," he said.

The cutting was kindly contributed by Dr. R. Dickinson.

It only remains to say that both lexicographers and members of the Post Office are fully eligible to join and indeed would be very welcome members. G.N.K.

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**MEMORANDUM ON THE METHOD OF ALPHABETIZATION LAID DOWN BY THE DRAFT BRITISH STANDARD FOR INDEXES**

**NEIL R. FISK**

I believe there are librarians among us, and if there is only one of them who doubles the job of information officer then I shall expect support for what I have to say.

5.2 Word-by-Word and Letter-by-Letter

This unqualified insistence upon word-by-word order is putting professionalism

* Read at the special extra meeting of the Society of Indexers, 6th December, 1962.