tion has become so efficient that of the approximately hundred-thousand persons identified by means of fingerprints in the Main record collection every year some 90 per cent. give the same or similar names in which they were first convicted. To take advantage of this we run a nominal index containing the names, fingerprint classification formula, age, height, and Criminal Record Office number. When a set of fingerprints is received for search the indexing officer, who is, of course, a trained fingerprint man, can literally at a glance arrive at the primary classification. This, in large concentrations of common names, excludes all those bearing the remaining 1,023 primary groups. Again, a glance at the form will tell him the secondary classification so that when the information on an index card appears to relate to the form being indexed, immediate comparison is made. This by-passes classification and searching and saves a great deal of time. Fig. 18, which was prepared by ex-Chief Superintendent F. R. Cherrill when head of the Fingerprint Branch, demonstrates in another way the usefulness of the system of identification.

A SOCIAL EVENT

On Friday, 29th May, 1964, the evening before the A.G.M., the Society held a Sherry Party at the Aslib Headquarters (by kind permission of the Director), 3 Belgrave Square, S.W.1. The Council Chamber and Anteroom provided an ideal setting for some 44 members and their guests to meet and chat for a couple of hours. This was the Society’s first social gathering and was something of an experiment but the occasion seems to have been so successful that we hope to hold another next year.

The Society was extremely pleased to welcome a number of distinguished guests including Sir Frank and Lady Francis, Mr. Michael MacLagan (the Wheatley Medallist for 1962) and Mrs. MacLagan, Mr. H. D. Barry, Mr. D. J. Foskett, Mr. L. H. Sidwell and Mr. R. C. Wright. The Honorary Secretary would like to thank Mr. Jack Bird for his help and also mention his ‘volunteers’ who plied those present with food and drink.

REPORT ON REMUNERATION

In June, 1962, the Council set up a Committee on Remuneration for Indexing Work to consider the earlier report (published in The Indexer, Vol. 1, No. 3, Summer, 1959, pp. 78-81) and, if thought fit, to revise it and bring it up to date. The Committee consisted of Miss R. D. Coole, Messrs. R. L. Collison, G. L. Hipkins and M. Wace. The Chairman and Honorary Secretary to be members ex officio. The report of the Committee, which has been approved by Council, is as follows:—

INDEXING PROCEDURE

In order to consider the question of book indexing in all its aspects, it is perhaps as well to outline the various steps normally undertaken when indexing a book. These may be summarised as:

(1a) reading through the book to gain a general idea of the subject-matter, and the consequent noting of points to be watched, queries to be cleared up, etc.

(1b) the actual process of indexing on cards, slips, etc., with the addition of cross-references, notes for consideration of synonyms, etc.
(1c) editing of entries—consisting of final survey of the index as a whole, tying up of references, expansion or contraction of entries, etc.

(1d) preparation for the press—numbering of slips or cards. MS. should be submitted on numbered cards or slips. Typing on sheets should be an extra charge.

(1e) correction of the proofs of the index. Any late insertions affecting pagination will add disproportionately to the work involved at this stage and should be charged accordingly.

SYSTEMS OF PAYMENT

There are five main methods of assessing payment:

(2a) an agreed figure to be fixed between the publisher and indexer before the work is done, and based on the length and nature of the text and the type of index required.

(2b) payment by 1,000 page entries, an entry such as ‘pp. 14-17’ counting as four entries.

(2c) payment by the number of pages of text.

(2d) payment by the total number of columns in the index.

(2e) payment by the number of hours.

Method (2a) is probably the best especially when an indexer is able to study the work carefully before stating a fee. It has advantages for the rapid accurate worker, but an indexer can easily underestimate the amount of work involved.

Method (2b), while fairly reflecting the actual amount of work (other than research), is cumbersome, and may lead to a number of unnecessary references, while the checking for payment is itself a waste of effort.

Method (2c) is unsatisfactory owing to the wide variations in density of references, but it does at least have the merit that the rapid indexer is not penalised.

Method (2d) is also unsatisfactory as it depends on variables such as size of page and size of type used for the index.

Method (2e) is based on a mutual trust of publisher and indexer, both of whom realise the implications of full-scale indexing and are prepared to make some allowances for economic circumstances, questions of experience and speed, etc.

COSTING

It is felt that books can be divided into three main categories from the point of view of indexing:

(3a) straightforward books such as chatty reminiscences, the indexes of which consist mainly of names and places, with few problems of alphabetical arrangement and with few concepts or ideas to be indexed.

(3b) books of moderate scholarship where good general, but little specialist, knowledge is required, plus a good grounding in the principles of indexing.

(3c) scholarly and specialist works in the humanities or sciences requiring specialist knowledge and detailed indexing of concepts or ideas.

The previous Report did not include periodicals but it is felt that the majority of those indexed will naturally belong to section (3c) and the remainder to section (3b).
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommends the following scales of remuneration for indexing work done at home:

(4a) for books in category (3a) minimum payment should be 9/6 per hour.

(4b) for books and periodicals in category (3b) minimum payment should be 12/6 per hour.

(4c) for books and periodicals in category (3c) minimum payment should be 15/- per hour.

The above recommendations take into account the assignment of copyright by the indexer and the fact that the publisher may use the index in any other edition (including paperbacks).

The Committee recognises that there are so many variables that it is not possible to lay down hard and fast rules. For example, where a rush job is required in some cases the indexer may have to charge a higher rate.

June, 1964.

WHEATLEY MEDAL 1963 AWARDED

The award of the Wheatley Medal for 1963 was made to Mr. J. M. Dickie for the index to his How to catch trout (W. & R. Chambers), during the annual Library Association Conference at Birmingham on 5th July last.

Mr. M. C. Pottinger, Chairman of the Library Association’s Publications Committee, in presenting the medal urged publishers to realise that a book is often only as good as its index and no more.

‘A bad index, a skimpy index, can so often destroy the value of the book itself. How can a publisher bring himself to produce a reference book of, say, 600 pages, with an index running to 12 pages—one page of index to fifty pages of text?’

‘The index is literally the key to the lock. A bad key, an ill-fitting key, or a hastily-wrought key won’t unlock the door.’

‘I gather that some publishers regard the index as a rather tiresome convention and largely a waste of paper compared with the text of the book. I would like to make a plea to the publishers to pay particular regard to the size, quality, consistency and commonsense of the indices to their books, and a plea to authors to devote as much thoughtfulness and thoroughness to the preparation of the index as they do to the preparation of the text.’

Repeating to Mr. Pottinger, Mr. Dickie said, inter alia: ‘Having spent all my working life in publishing, I have had much to do with indexes. As it happens, this has been more in the using of indexes than in the making of them, but no experience, I think, could have made me more appreciative of the need for good indexing and more appreciative also, in consequence, of the excellence of the purpose for which the Wheatley Medal was instituted.

‘With the index I think I was fortunate in two respects. In the first place, the book itself was planned as a reference work and so lent itself specially well to indexing; to tell the truth, there are so many things to forget in fishing and I have such a bad memory, that, quite apart from anything else, I was eager to produce a good index for my own use. In the second place, I was fortunate in being able