Indexing, like book classification, bibliography, documentation and abstracting, is a method – all too often haphazard and unsystematic – of making known information which would otherwise remain hidden and buried.

Librarians, equally vitally concerned with the organization of knowledge, have had, for more than half a century, a body of national repute, The Library Association, and an accepted code of cataloguing practice, the Anglo-American Code, to guide them in their work. Indexers, largely working alone, have had neither of these benefits, and it was to make good these deficiencies that the Society of Indexers was founded last year. As we have already discovered there are many problems to be faced for there appears to be little uniformity in the sphere of indexing, whether it be in the techniques employed or in the remuneration received. We have one or two excellent small pamphlets on indexing whereas an urgent need is for a first-rate comprehensive manual; we know of no established courses of tuition and yet they are a prime necessity. (A course is being started for members in April which it is hoped will be well supported.) Surprisingly the importance of indexing is not widely accepted by publishers who, in our opinion, should know better. We are endeavouring to remind them of their responsibility by a feature in this issue of The Indexer.

Published material in the shape of books, pamphlets, periodical articles, papers, theses, abstracts grow more prolific each year. Civilization today seems determined to be remembered by the wealth of its published work. Our Society caters for men and women working with every kind of printed matter whether it be scientific, literary, business, cultural and being the first of its kind in the world it has of necessity to tread carefully. But a start has been made – we have a Society and now we have a journal. We hope that we shall be able in a small but significant way to make knowledge more readily accessible.

HAROLD SMITH