Annual Report of the Council for the year 1975-76

The Council has pleasure in submitting the following report on the Society's activities during the year ended 31st March, 1976.

Council. There have been ten meetings of the Council. At the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting, the vacancies for two members were filled by Miss M. Piggott and Mr P. E. Found, at the Council's invitation.

Constitution. After detailed study of the constitution and consultation with the Society's legal adviser, the Council recommended revisions, which were approved by the members at an Extraordinary General Meeting. The revised constitution is published in full in the April 1976 issue of The Indexer.

Finance. The accounts are published separately. The Treasurer has provided the Council with detailed analytical reviews of the Society's finances, on the basis of which the Council recommended and an Extraordinary General Meeting approved the increase of the annual membership subscription to £5.00 from 1st April, 1976.

Honorary professional advisers. The Council is much indebted to the Society's solicitor and legal adviser, Mr Leslie Paisner, and to its elected Auditor and financial adviser, Mr William Davies, for their unfailing help and guidance, and expresses its gratitude for their generosity.

Membership. At the beginning of the year, the membership was reported as 322, compared with 381 a year earlier. Half-yearly reports to the Council have shown the following progress during 1975-76:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 Sept 1975</th>
<th>31 March 1976</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UK &amp; Eire</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseas (except Australia)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL (excluding Australia)</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia (provisional figure)</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>—*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL MEMBERSHIP</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The figure for Australia proved, when finally checked, to be 56; but, for reasons which will...
appear later in the report, no figure for Australia is included in the end-of-year membership figures.

During the year, 90 persons were admitted to membership. This figure includes 16 members whose applications were submitted in 1974-75 but whose formal admission occurred in 1975-76. The true figure for 1975-76 is therefore 74, an average of just over 6 per month. The number of enquiries about membership received by the Secretary was 142. Thus, of those who made enquiries, slightly over half became members.

The Register. On 31st March 1976, there were 102 Registered Indexers. The Registrar received 58 enquiries from authors, publishers, and others seeking help. On a quarterly basis, the numbers were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>April-June</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July-September</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>October-December</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>January-March</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

indicating a considerable upturn in 1976. This compares favourably with the downturn reported a year ago, which started in the last quarter of 1974 and continued right through 1975. In response to the 58 enquiries, the Registrar provided 188 possible contacts, every effort being made to spread them evenly amongst all the Registered Indexers. It is generally true, though, that enquirers tend to follow up contacts in the London area, and to a lesser extent in other big cities, rather than elsewhere; and this is a matter of concern to the Council. The specialist fields in which enquiries have predominated are: law, medicine, management subjects, economics, sociology, and politics. Many commercial publishers have their own list of indexers and only approach the Register for specially difficult assignments or when their own indexers are not available. It is often the case that the Register, by introducing an indexer to a publisher, initiates a relationship which will continue as long as the indexer delivers satisfactory work.

The Registrar has welcomed the co-operation of those who have enabled her to keep up to date her detailed records of the work completed by each Registered Indexer. Not all have maintained contact, however; so a form, for completion and return, will be supplied to every Registered Indexer shortly before each Annual General Meeting.

Board of Assessors. The Board has met four times and has considered 24 applications for admission to the Register. Of these applicants:

- 9 have been admitted to the Register;
- 4 have been requested to submit a third index;
- 6 have been recommended to re-apply after six months;
- 5 are still under consideration.

The Board has greatly appreciated the specialist assistance of no fewer than 25 Registered Indexers who have voluntarily undertaken the first-stage assessment of applicants' indexes. The Council approved a recommendation by the Board that applicants for registration should be required to pay a 'handling charge' of £2.00 as a contribution towards the high administrative costs of dealing with applications. In recent months, the Board has welcomed three new members appointed by Council: Mrs K. M. Suggate, Mr A. B. Lyons, and Dr J. E. Holmstrom. The resignation from the Board of Mr N. R. Fisk, after almost five years' service, was accepted by the Council with much regret.

Editorial Board. There have been no meetings of the Editorial Board, but its members have continued to give individual assistance in the production of the journal.

Journal Subscriptions Officer. The Society's journal, The Indexer, has a wide readership. In addition to its circulation to our own members and those of the American Society of Indexers, there are growing numbers of institutional and academic as well as individual subscribers. The Council therefore decided that the administration of journal subscriptions should be separated from the duties of the Treasurer. Mrs M. G. Pygott volunteered to undertake this responsibility, and the Council was pleased to appoint her Journal Subscriptions Officer from 1st April, 1976.

Library Committee. The Council has appointed a committee to consider the function and operation of the Society's library. Its members, in addition to the Librarian, Mr L. M. Harrod, are Miss M. Piggott and Mr A. A. Raven.

National conference. The Society's first national conference was very successfully held in London on 20th March, 1976. A full report of the proceedings is in course of preparation.

Local groups. It was a matter of concern to the Council that members in various parts of the country felt themselves isolated by distance from the Society's activities. The decision was therefore made in September 1975 to encourage members in each locality to establish contacts with each other and, whenever practicable, to form local...
groups. The first was formed on Merseyside in October; members in the Reading area are collaborating with each other in producing their own local newsletter; and there has been a meeting of members in Hertfordshire. In December, the distribution to members of an up-to-date membership list was intended primarily to provide the information on which the development of further local contacts could be based.

**London meetings.** In the London area, members have responded with interest to meetings of a more informal character, and attendance has increased. The provision of time for social intercourse has been welcomed, and open discussions on various indexing topics have been lively and constructive.

**Publicity.** During recent months, items concerning the Society’s work and aims have appeared in *The Times*, *Guardian*, *Observer*, *Times Literary Supplement*, *Times Educational Supplement*, *New Scientist*, and *Bookseller*. Basic information about the Society is inserted in a wide range of year-books and other works of reference, both national and international.

**Indexing fees.** The Society’s recommended minimum hourly rate for indexing was increased in July 1975. Recognising that even the increased figure had already been largely overtaken by inflation, the Council has kept this matter under review, and will continue to do so.

**Developments in Australia.** On 1st September, 1975, Mr H. Godfrey Green relinquished his position as Corresponding Member in Australia, and Mrs Jean Uhl volunteered to take his place for the time being. At a meeting of Australian members held in Melbourne on 4th December, 1975, it was decided that an independent society should be inaugurated. Since that date, the Council has made proposals to the newly-formed society in Australia concerning its future relationship with this Society, and negotiations are still in progress.

**Indexing in other countries.** The Council is reviewing possible developments in other countries, particularly in Europe, in pursuit of the Society’s aims. In this context, the significance of the role of Corresponding Members is being studied.

**Wheatley Medal.** The winner of the Library Association’s Wheatley Medal for Indexing, 1974 (awarded in 1975), was Mr C. C. Banwell, a member of the Society since 1963, for his index to the *Encyclopedia of forms and precedents*. The Council welcomes this recognition of the work of Mr Banwell, who has contributed so substantially to law indexing.

The Council has appointed Mr L. M. Harrod, Miss M. Piggott, and Mr M. Wace to be the Society’s representatives on the Wheatley Medal Joint Panel for 1976; and Dr J. E. Holmstrom to be the reserve representative.

**BSI Documentation Standards Committee.** Mr L. M. Harrod has continued to serve on this Committee as the Society’s representative, and Miss M. Piggott is also a member of the Committee, which has now completed its full-scale revision of BS 3700:1964, *Recommendations for the preparation of indexes*. The new Standard should be published within the next few months.

**BSI Panel on Thesauri and Indexing Principles.** The Society was invited in May 1975 to be represented on this Panel. Mr P. F. Broxis, who had represented the Library Association on the Panel since it began work in 1973, accepted the Council’s invitation to represent also the interests of the Society. He reports that the Panel, having helped to formulate ISO 2788, *Guidelines for the establishment and development of monolingual thesauri*, has progressed to work on similar guidelines for multilingual thesauri. It is also at work on a draft International Standard on *Indexing principles*.

**Correspondence course.** It came to the attention of the Council that some members of the Society had not clearly understood the purpose of the correspondence course run by the Rapid Results College. The Council therefore informed the College that, in the Society’s opinion, what the course provides is an introduction to the basic principles and techniques of indexing. The College accepted this view, and has included in the course a statement to this effect and states also that some practical experience of indexing, as distinct from exercises included in the learning process, is a prerequisite to admission to the Society’s Register. It is pleasing to note that members who have followed the course express satisfaction at all they have learnt from it. Enrolment figures (provided by the College) suggest that it continues to meet a need:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Enrolments</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1973-4</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-5</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-6</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A personal message from the retiring Chairman:**
Mr John M. Shaftesley writes: ‘After three years as Chairman of the Society, I believe it is time for me to give way for another member to take on the privilege of presiding over its day-to-day
proceedings. I resign with a number of regrets, as it has been a highly interesting and rewarding experience. I should like to thank warmly all my fellow-officers and members of the Council, who have worked so hard and willingly to make the affairs of the Society go smoothly, and to whom the members owe a debt of continuing gratitude. The past year has been heavy in terms of business transacted, as will be seen from the report presented above; and, as it is natural for the signatory of that report, our new Honorary Secretary, Mr J. Ainsworth Gordon, to omit his own services from it, I take the opportunity of thanking him for his assiduity and enthusiasm on behalf of all the members.'

**Report on the Annual General Meeting**

At the 19th Annual General Meeting which was held at the Library Association's headquarters on Thursday, 20th May, 1976, the Annual Report for 1975-76 was unanimously adopted, and the minutes of the Special (Extraordinary) General Meeting which was held on 29th January, 1976 (and reported in our last issue) approved.

The meeting was attended by thirty-four members, and apologies for absence were received from twenty-one.

**Officers.** The members named below, having been nominated, and there being no other nominations, were elected to hold the office shown against their name for the year 1976-77. Mr Bakewell assumed the Chair and paid tribute to the retiring Chairman, Mr J. M. Shaftesley.

- Chairman . . . . Mr K. G. B. Bakewell
- Vice-Chairman . . Mrs D. Frame
- Secretary . . . . Mr J. Ainsworth Gordon
- Treasurer . . . . Mrs A. M. Wilkinson
- Registrar . . . . Mrs. E. Wallis
- Editor . . . . Mr L. M. Harrod

**Council.** Six members having been nominated for the four vacancies on the Council, an election was held with the following result:

- Miss Mary Piggott .................. 29
- Mrs Valerie L. Chandler .............. 26
- Dr J. Edwin Holmstrom ............... 21
- Mr David W. Pygott .................. 19

The four receiving the highest number of votes were declared elected to serve for the year 1976-77.

**Annual Report and Accounts.** The Annual Report for the year ending 31st March, 1976, which had been circulated, was adopted, as was the Statement of Accounts which had been audited.

**Auditor.** Mr W. Davies was re-elected Auditor.

**Payment of Expenses of Members of Council.** After discussion of a suggestion that the payment of the expenses of members elected to serve on the Council would make it easier for members resident at a distance from London to accept nomination, it was decided to refer the matter to Council.

**Donations from Registered Indexers.** A proposal that Registered Indexers should make donations to the Society as a token of appreciation was also referred to the Council.

**Vote of Thanks.** It was decided to place on record the Society's appreciation of the services of the Honorary Officers and of all the members who had contributed in various ways to the work of the Society.

**Message to the President.** It was decided to send a message of greetings and good wishes to the President who had been unable to be present through ill health.

The Annual General Meeting was followed by a wine and cheese conversazione. Those present found this a welcome opportunity for personal contacts and informal discussions.

**Bibliographical references**

A very useful guide to those who have to provide lists of bibliographical references to books or to periodical articles is the new (1976) revision of the British Standard 1629 which was first published in 1950.

It is based on International Standard ISO 690 and is intended to give guidance to those making bibliographical references which are not in themselves primarily bibliographical. The recommended rules list the bibliographical elements essential for identifying a publication, for the presentation of references and for the order and form of individual elements in them.

BS 1629 : 1976 is available from the BSI Sales Department, 101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9ND, price £3.10 post free.

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