PROCEEDINGS OF THE FIRST SCOTTISH CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

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CONTENTS

2. The publisher's view of indexing: Archie Turnbull.
3. How a dictionary was made: Russell Walker.
4. Indexing techniques and standards; the developing role of the Registrar of Indexers: Elizabeth J. Wallis.

The following reports quote substantially from the papers prepared by all four speakers. The conference was reported by Mrs A. J. Angus and by Mrs A. McCarthy and the report was edited by Mrs Dainty.

The opinions expressed are those of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the Society.

In opening the conference Mr K. G. B. Bakewell, Chairman of the Society, thanked its Scottish organizers and went on to comment briefly on current activities of the Society's Council concerning public relations, international affiliations and the indexer-publisher questionnaire, as well as on his own position as Library Association representative on the Council. Good wishes had been sent by Scottish writers Nigel Tranter and Francis Thomson, who were unable to be present, and a similar message arrived in a telegram from the President, Mr G. Norman Knight, to whom an acknowledgement was sent.

THE SOCIETY OF INDEXERS: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW

J. Ainsworth Gordon

Mr Gordon established with humour his credentials as the bearer of a Scottish surname and as a collateral descendant of Harrison Ainsworth, and then proved on his own account that he is a speaker of distinction and a worthy champion of the aims of the Society. In the course of an affectionate tribute to the Society's founder and President, Mr G. Norman Knight, whose indexing output over many years has been as phenomenal as has been his promotion of the Society, Mr Gordon made the point that the Edinburgh Conference was being held exactly twenty years after Mr Knight's inaugural meeting of the Society in London, and that during those twenty years everything organized by the Society had continued to take place in London. Then, turning to the present, he went on:

This conference in Edinburgh is something completely new, something that many people thought...
would never happen, but it is something that you have made happen. You have proved that we aren't just a London-based Society, and I believe that this really is the beginning of a new era. This is an event that I have believed in, hoped and worked for, and you have made it come true.

What has the Society achieved in those first twenty years? Most important of all it has ensured that indexers need never feel professionally isolated as Norman Knight felt for thirty years; it has put them into a relationship with each other so that they can know and learn from each other and share their problems.

Then, since 1958 it has provided in *The Indexer* a professional journal which builds up into a sort of encyclopaedia of indexing and is a treasure-store of information. *The Indexer* is a major contribution made by the Society to the cause of good indexing, not only for our own members but for regular subscribers in some sixty countries round the world.

Thirdly, by 1964 the British Standards Institution had been prevailed upon to publish authoritative recommendations on the technical standards required for the indexing of books and periodicals. That was an immense achievement, but we have put in still more work in recent years in assisting in revising the Standard, thoroughly and effectively. I'm sure every member of the Society is familiar with BS 3700:1976; I only wish the same could be said of every author and publisher.

We have also created the Register, which has now been operating for almost nine years. There is much I could say about it, but fortunately we have the real expert with us; Mrs Wallis has been Registrar ever since 1968 and what she doesn't know about the Register could be written on the back of a postage stamp. I regard her as a sort of oracle and this afternoon the oracle will speak. She will talk too about the Board of Assessors, without which the Register could not exist since it is the Board which sets standards for admission to the Register and deals with all the applications.

Then there is the Publications Board, which is a very recent development. The Council has taken the old Editorial Board, which has been associated with *The Indexer* from the beginning, enlarged and renamed it and made it responsible for publications generally. The recent Haig-Brown Discussion Paper was the first fruit of its labours.

The Society has been exerting its influence abroad as well as in Britain. *The Indexer* had always had, in terms of subscribers, a widespread overseas circulation in universities and colleges and in schools of librarianship and research organizations. In terms of Society members there were, even among the Founder Members, a few Americans, and during the sixties the membership in the United States and Canada increased until, in 1968 and with 38 members, they formed themselves into the American Society of Indexers. Within seven months their membership had risen to 146. Formal terms of affiliation between the two Societies were ratified in 1971, since when the ASI has also shared with us *The Indexer* as its official journal. Similar, though slower, developments took place in Australia, expansion quickened in the seventies, and in April 1976 came the formation of the Australian Society of Indexers. Terms of affiliation have been worked out between their Executive Committee and our Council, and members of both Societies will be asked to ratify them at General Meetings in May. *The Indexer* will then become the official journal of three affiliated societies of indexers.

In 1973 the Society took a course of action which some members still criticize. From the start, experienced members had devoted much time and effort to providing training in indexing for beginners and less experienced members, and training lectures developed into a training course which, unfortunately, had to be run in London. How could its benefits be made available to all those members—a majority—who could not attend evening courses in London? Norman Knight made the first attempt at a solution when he edited some of the lectures and had them published in book form in 1969 under the title of Training in Indexing. This served a valuable purpose, and still does, but it could not meet the needs of those who feel they must have the guidance and the pressure of a teacher; a correspondence course was the only practicable solution. The Society had neither the facilities nor the resources to run such a course, which needed to be operated by a professional correspondence college, and it was most fortunate that the Rapid Results College agreed to do so. The course was prepared and tutored by members of the Society, but all administration and finance was undertaken by the College. Since 1973 a complete basic indexing course has been permanently available to students, not only in Britain but throughout the world. In four years there have been over 200 enrolments, roughly one-third of them from overseas countries; I have ample evidence that there are a great many satisfied students and remarkably few complaints.

Lastly, there is the Wheatley Medal, which is a reminder of the generous way in which the Library Association has always collaborated with the Society, for it is the LA which funds the award and undertakes all its administration. Our contribution is to provide, each year, three expert members of the Joint Panel which judges the entries and picks the winner. The award is made, not to an indexer but to an index—the best index published originally in Britain during the three years preceding the year of each award.

I need not enlarge on the importance to indexing of the Wheatley Medal, but I want to comment on something of the greatest significance; since the award began in 1960 five of the twelve winning indexes have been compiled by the author. Not by people whom we in the Society describe as "qualified
professional indexers' but by people whom we refer to as 'authors'. We do rather tend, in the Society, to adopt an 'us' and 'them' attitude, don't we? And this attitude is not only misconceived but contrary to the interests of the Society. According to our Constitution, 'Membership of the Society shall be open to all bona fide indexers'. But bona fide simply means 'genuine', so if you first write a book and then index it, does the fact that you are a genuine author prevent you from being also a genuine indexer? It should be the Society's objective to attract author-indexers into membership by every means possible, and if author-indexers can win five out of twelve Wheatley Medals, what could be more bona fide that that?

What matters about indexers is that all should become better indexers. We might do more to get book reviewers interested in indexing, for although one reviewer commented that a certain index 'could not be faulted' there has never been, except in a Platonic sense, a perfect index. We are not yet perfect, and no matter how expert we become there is still room for improvement, still more to learn. Of course those who have to assess the quality of other people's indexes sometimes find it too easy to discover flaws in every index, but all of us should think first of improving our own standards and then of helping other indexers to improve theirs.

You all, I'm sure, have ideas about how these aims should be achieved, but the more you can do for yourselves the better will you advance the cause of good indexing. I say this for a very good reason, for there are limits to what the Society can do, limits within ourselves. The possibilities are unlimited, but we are a voluntary Society that can only do as much as its members, individually and collectively, are able and willing to do. This conference provides an example, for it could not have happened had not several members been willing to give up time, to make an effort, to take on responsibilities.

Everything that this Society does is done by voluntary effort, and though The Indexer is one tangible benefit of subscription, each issue is produced by the voluntary efforts of the Editor and many other members. When you receive this year's Annual Report you will see how much is being done, not only to administer the Society and maintain its efficiency, but for publishers, for people and for organizations who regard a free advice service as something they can take for granted, for members and non-members seeking help and information, for hundreds of people thinking of taking up indexing, and for the advancement of good indexing in a multitude of ways. Being Secretary is exciting, for I get to know at least something about almost everything that is going on, and what impresses me more than anything is the immense concern that most of our members have, for the art and craft and science of indexing and for the Society itself. With you rests the future success of both.

Discussion of points raised by Mr Gordon came later in the Open Forum. His talk was followed by Mr Turnbull whose stimulating address closed the morning's proceedings. After a lunch break characterized by an informal but lively interchange of views, Mr Russell Walker spoke on the making of the Scottish national dictionary, and Mrs Wallis, from her experience as Registrar, dealt with techniques and standards in an address which merged into vigorous discussion. Mr Bakewell had to leave before the Open Forum began; it was conducted by Mr Gordon, who finally closed the conference by replying on behalf of the speakers and organizers to a vote of thanks from those others present.

THE PUBLISHER'S VIEW OF INDEXING

Archie Turnbull
Secretary to the Edinburgh University Press

The book is the information-retrieval system par excellence and some books are nothing else. A telephone directory is a book and an index; so is a dictionary, but you don't look in dictionaries. So an index is an information-retrieval system to an information-retrieval system that does not provide its own immediate easy access, and its function as a displayed filing-system is to show the user whether some particular topic is discussed in the book; if so, it must direct him quickly to the right page. That is its essential function. But it can also do something related to collective identity, for it can show the reader what the book is about, can offer a conspectus of the book, its range, scope, level and even intention. I have tried to make this second function a feature of all my indexes, but I am now seriously thinking of abandoning this very valuable index function, for I have to say: 'Who cares? Who cares about quality any more?'

Dr F. R. Leavis has iterated that our civilization, week by week, is crumbling away at the edges, eroding, almost without our noticing, till it's gone and we can't ever get it back again. One of the changes is in what has happened to the book, printing and allied trades, which used to be run by folk who knew about books and printing; now they're run by financial managers who know about money, management and marketing, but who wouldn't
know a pica from a peashooter. Publication proposals are assessed solely by profitability and books are treated like packages of soap.

Why has Thomas Nelson in Edinburgh ceased to exist; Oliver and Boyd been sold, along with E. & S. Livingstone, to the Longman group, just part of a larger empire; why does R. & R. Clark belong to Imperial Tobacco and T. & A. Constable to the Financial Times? Because only a change in ownership could obtain capital to transform the industry from small business to big business, to revolutionize the technology of print, just as in publishing it revolutionized marketing and distribution. Such changes are capital-intensive; to keep costly machines running at all times you have to be geared to economies of scale and the mass-market.

Unfortunately, a book remains an intensely human thing that involves human judgements based on experience and intuition, and the men who control the machines are ignorant of what a well-printed book should look like; advanced technology has brought about the gradual abandonment of quality. Isn't it sad that there is no means in Britain today to print a book as well as was done before by craftsmen using relatively primitive equipment but natural, trained and instinctive judgement and taste? Binding is worse; paper is even worse. Still, I am willing to try anything; I have been among the first in Britain to use new techniques such as four-line mathematical composition, computer-produced books and colour microfiche. I have a commitment to advanced technology, but I have a commitment to quality also, and I cannot match them any more. It becomes ever harder to sustain even quite moderate standards, and even if I were willing to pay the earth I still could not get the quality that was taken as a norm only twenty years ago. I wonder if the people who don't care what a book looks like care about an index?

Now we come to costs. As quality has declined, so costs have soared, and I face a double problem: how to sustain quality, regardless of costs; and how to sustain publishing at all, given what has happened to costs. Breaking down the cost of producing one of my standard formats under composition, printing, paper, binding, jacket, I find that the book that sold in 1970 for £2 must now in 1977 be put on sale for £6.80. This is going to affect my market, so if I am to stay in business I must find means of cutting corners to keep costs down. That is, I must collude with those in the printing trade whom I have just been criticizing. I must on my part abandon quality to keep in business.

It is long years since I abandoned galley proofs; I go straight to page, not helping my indexer thereby, since I cut his preparation time drastically. I have long given up the refinement of setting quotations a size or two sizes smaller than the text. And don't ask for footnotes on the foot of pages! So indeed I am one of those whom Leavis rightly attacks; week by week I am abandoning the elegancies that have for so long been part of our culture.

So why should the indexer be exempt from this sad doom to which all else in the book is subject? The answer is that he is not exempt; and if he doesn't soon mend his ways he will be abandoned, for the obvious way to save costs on an index is not to have one. In considering who pays for the index the publisher has first to make a value-judgement, almost to decide a question of ethics. If an index is essential it is too important to be left to the author, especially in its second function of providing a synoptic view of the whole book. Assuming that indexing is a skill, a craft that has to be learned and mastered, has the author any responsibility in the matter? Some publishers let the author do the index, or else charge him, either by cash payment or by deduction from royalty, for having it done by a skilled indexer. This worries me. I do not charge the author for having an artist design a book jacket, nor for the skilled work of my in-house editor, so, once I have determined that there should be an index, I should not leave the author with the option of doing it himself or paying for it. My own method is to discuss with the author the necessity of having an index, what kind of index, and whether or not he can provide it himself. If he can, I let him; if not, I undertake to provide it at my cost and to allow him to approve it and suggest modifications. This system allows me to get the best index I can, from the user's standpoint, but it is at my cost and I can't much longer afford it.

I don't know if your society tries to agree a going rate for indexing; if so, don't tell me; I don't want to know! If I undertake to meet the cost of an index it's going to be what I can afford, and that may very well be lower than what you think you should receive. It will almost certainly be lower than what I think you should receive.

Let us assume that the indexer of my book receives £100, though I have never paid anything like that for one. Breaking down processing costs as before, there will be for a sixteen-page double column index to my standard book another £200 for composition, machining, paper and binding; a total of £300. And that means an increase in selling price of the book of 75p. That is what the customer has to pay for having that book thoroughly indexed. I, as publisher, haven't got £300 to spend on providing a source; even if the author provides the index himself, it is still £200, and such sums do not grow on trees in the gardens of short-run scholarly publishers. So it is a blue lookout for you.

If you and I agree that the index is a necessary part of a book, what can we jointly do to help it survive? My answer is: be absolutely clear as to the kind, length and time involved. The first recommendation I would make is, never undertake an index without a precise and formal brief from the book's editor, and preferably a written brief. It is the editor's job to define what kind of index is needed, what its scope should be; the onus is on him.
If, however, he says that you must decide, you must make up your own mind; get that in writing too, and he has no come-back.

If the brief must first say 'what kind' it must then say 'how long'. I don't really know which is the more critical, and indeed they cannot be taken apart. Kind conditions length, and vice versa. But in deciding what kind, we are involved in value judgements and subjective factors; with length the editor has practical issues to guide him or to solve. These are based on the fact that books today are usually printed in sheets of 32, 64 or 128 pages; this affects the length of the index, since adding oddments of paper is costly and unsatisfactory. So back we go to our problem, which is yours and mine. How do you accommodate the index at the end of a book?

The best and cheapest way to proceed is to call for non-imposed page proofs, called tag proofs; they are the proper pages, in sequence and folioed but not 'backed-up', proofed on one side only. If the publisher is more extravagant he can ask for 'page-in-galley', much the same thing, but it may well be costed against him as a separate operation. Now, if the indexer works from tag proof he can finalize the index in one go; it can be set, proofed, read, and corrected, and the printer can then impose the text and the index as a single operation. He can adjust his imposition to absorb any oddment into the penultimate sheet, thus leaving the final sheet normal and strong, and the problem of trimming the index to fit whatever is left over is avoided; it doesn't arise. So if an editor limits you to only four or five pages because that is all that is left on the last sheet, point out to him that he should use tag proofs.

Even so, it is perfectly proper for an editor to impose a length limit on the indexer, and if he does, it is absolutely vital that you should stick to it; there is no excuse at all for exceeding it. He may tell you how many A4 pages, double-spaced, are allowed, or he may give this as so many printed pages. If so, ask how many printed lines per column, and then, allowing for narrow column setting and turnovers, you can type within his limits. But let him do the homework of detailing those limits, for that's what he is paid for.

The two people who suffer most in the making of a book are the indexer and the binder, for they come right at the end of the process. Inevitably in the whole process there arise some delays, and time lost is sales lost and money lost, so everyone is going to make it up by forcing the indexer, and the binder, to conform to revised schedules, to compensate for earlier delays that had nothing to do with them at all. So the third main problem is time. I try to work to a sixteen-week schedule, from typescript to bound book, and I need to have the book processed and printed in twelve weeks; this doesn't give the indexer much time. Remember, I'm talking about survival.

If I can actually produce and publish in something like four months, not only do I start getting my money back that much sooner—and we live under the God of Cash Flow—but there are things I can afford to publish, and with profit, which I could not afford if they took nine months to get out.

It follows that the indexer must start his job with a copy of the typescript. Maybe you always do. Do you? (The answer was 'No'.) If you don't get started till a page-proof is available, then you'll never finish in time to allow the index to be imposed along with the book, allowing the printing process to be continuous from start to finish. Working from typescript gives you a four-weeks start. I am not here to tell you how to do it; that would be presumptuous; but however it's done, I am quite clear that efficient and economic book production means that the indexer works from typescript. After the four-weeks start he will be given a set of unimposed page proofs, or page-in-galley, and be required to hand in the index within two weeks of their receipt. Two weeks is all that is possible, and if I can't work within these limits then I have really no option; the answer is—no index. But I assure you it can and does work, provided that we go through the whole editorial process like a drill squad at Sandhurst, index and all.

I want, finally, to throw out a few suggestions about little ways of saving money on indexes; little ways of eroding our civilization, every one of them, but better some index than no index. First, it's an index, not two indexes. Never commit the solecism of an author and a subject index; we have only the one alphabet and we know its sequence. I've yet to meet a scholar who doesn't deplore a plethora of indexes. Second, limit your punctuation. Maybe you think you've not much scope for reducing punctuation in an index, but I bet most of you separate the heading from the page reference with a comma. It is not needed. Every key stroke saved is money saved. Third, an index is alphabetical. Your job is to decide where to include a reference, for I can't allow you more than one shot, so never double references. And eliminate see also and q.v., which are merely irritants and a waste of time and money. Fourth, proper names: if the author refers only to Smith and Jones it is not your job to find out their initials. That's the editor's job, so list them for him if you will, and let him ask the author to identify his characters. Do not waste time on that job, for you're not getting paid for it.

Finally, the thorniest problem of them all, how do we treat subheads and sub-sub? Given that, for economy, we are using for the index small type in narrow measure, what's the point of narrowing the measure still further by indenting subs and sub-sub? Now, where subheadings are concerned, there is always a good case for running them on. You do this, in any case, with the kind of chronological index customary with biographical and historical works. If
it is necessary to indent, then make it the minimum indent; but I honestly wonder if it is essential. Where you run to sub-subs, you have a problem. I throw out two suggestions. First, use italic for sub-subentries and run on. It won't work if you are already using italic for something else, like book titles. Second, turn the subentry into a main entry; instead of Black, sub-John, sub-Mary, why not two full-out entries, Black, J; Black, M?

I am sure that if we kept to a single index, reduced unnecessary punctuation, stopped cross-referencing, freed the indexer from having to search for full proper names, ran-on all subentries, reduced sub-subs to an absolute minimum and tried to run them on also, so as to make the fullest use of the narrow column measure, significant savings could be made. And every penny saved is helping to save the index itself.

**Discussion:** Lively debate followed Mr Turnbull's controversial address. Defence of the cross-reference was made by Mr Bakewell, Mr Dixon, Mr Gordon and Mrs Howat from both the indexer's and the user's point of view, and Mr Dixon also challenged the view that run-on subheadings were easier to use than those in tabulated form. Mr Turnbull, however, maintained his position on both matters. Mrs Dainty asked about the use of capitals, which Mr Turnbull thought were best limited as far as possible. Mr Vyner suggested numbering paragraphs at the typescript stage, but the usefulness of this was considered to be doubtful. Mrs Wallis asked the speaker how he judged an author's indexing competence and how he made allowances for the author's preferences if an indexer was employed. Mr Turnbull said it was a matter of personal judgement in assessing an author, usually with acquaintance over a period of time, and though he found it exceptional for an author to be a good indexer he could also make useful suggestions about indexing his own work.

**HOW A DICTIONARY WAS MADE:**

**THE SCOTTISH NATIONAL DICTIONARY**

Russell Walker
Editorial Manager, Churchill-Livingstone, Medical Division of the Longman Group

Mr Walker defined the scope and intention of the ten volumes that comprise the *SND*, and stressed that it is not a dictionary of Scottish Gaelic or a dictionary of the *whole* of the Scottish language; the words dealt with are those used from about 1700 to the present day. And, despite its name, it has no connection with the politics of Scottish Nationalism. He then commented on Scottish participation, of long standing, in British lexicography, starting with Dr Johnson who had conceived the idea of making a Scottish dictionary, though this came to nothing. Of the six scribes employed by Johnson in preparing his own dictionary, five were Scots.

Dr Johnson's Scottish counterpart was Dr John Jamieson who, in 1808, issued his *Etymological dictionary of the Scottish language* in two volumes. Jamieson mistakenly thought that the Scots language was a direct derivative of Scandinavian tongues and that the Picts were Scandinavian Goths, but his was a splendid piece of work for one man and he recruited many helpers or correspondents throughout Scotland who sent him words and examples of current usages in their dialectal areas, Scott described him as 'a little prolix and heavy, somewhat prosaic', and he was taken in by some young 'correspondents' in rural Ayrshire who obliged him with a list of absurd but plausible words which he printed in his dictionary as 'possibly French'. They have been preserved in the *SND*, with a parenthetical note: 'Jam., of extremely doubtful origin'.

Jamieson's work encouraged publication of early Scottish texts and glossaries, and Andrew Crawford, a contemporary, produced what he called *An eik to Dr. Jamieson's Dictionary*, 'eik' being, as in English 'to eke out', a supplement, and can be used for 'an addition to a glass of whisky'.

Continuing a historical progression of Scottish lexicographers, Mr Walker mentioned in particular Sir James Murray, a famous philologist, and Sir William Craigie of Dundee, probably the most distinguished English/Scots lexicographer of all time and one equally renowned in America. When, in 1907, the Scottish Dialect Committee was formed, Craigie was collaborating with William Grant and the collection of material for the *SND* was begun. Craigie began work in 1928 on the *Dictionary of the older Scottish tongue*, which deals with the middle period of Scots before Parliamentary Union, 1707, whereas the *SND* records Scots words after 1700 and up to the present. Its Scots-speaking areas exclude the Highlands and Western Islands, but include Campbeltown, Ulster, Caithness, Orkney and Shetland.

In 1929 Part I of the *Scottish national dictionary* was published. It was based partly on historical
principles, like the Oxford, partly on geographical lines like the English dialect dictionary, and it showed all the variants of all Scottish words in existence after 1700, ascertained pronunciations with dialect variations according to locality, and full derivations or etymologies.

William Grant died in 1948 and David Murison, a classical scholar of high academic achievement and personality, became Editor. In 1954 the School of Scottish Studies in Edinburgh became the centre of operations and work was carried out by a team of five assistants, of whom Mr Walker was one for seven years. Periodically the Editor would send out a questionnaire to the correspondents in the dialectal areas, and this was often heralded by a press notice in the local newspapers. During his personal revision of the slips he would relate the results of these questionnaires to the material already available, amplifying or modifying the information. Each assistant was allocated a letter of the alphabet and within it the words from the thousands of slips had to be reviewed in alphabetical order. Meticulous checking had to be carried out to ensure that sources were correct; sometimes a word would be of early usage, sometimes one would have been noted only a month before in some local newspaper, and scanning local newspapers in search of topical words was an interesting exercise.

The assistants composed the word articles from the slips, the Editor annotating and revising, with immense care about etymology. Quotations had to be checked at libraries all over Scotland and a bibliographical card-index was kept. Finally a typescript was prepared, sent to selected readers for review and returned to the Editor for the last approval. The dictionary was issued to subscribers in paper bound parts. Four parts made up a volume and the full set of ten volumes now costs £250.

Mr Walker described the scope of the information given in the Dictionary, under the following heads. First, it contains lists of words peculiar to Scotland and words in current use; for example, 'puddock' for frog, 'smeddum' meaning liveness, good sense or intelligence. Second, words which are common to Scots and English but which have different meanings; a 'dyke' in Scotland is a wall, but in England it is a ditch. Third, words relating to Scottish institutions, the Church, the Universities, the Law and Local Government. Here Mr Walker, commenting on the last category, asked where are now the Deans of Guild, the Baillies, the Provosts or the Royal Burghs. But there are still the Kirk, the Moderator, the General Assembly. Until recently, he said, we had Humanity and Natural Philosophy in our universities; now we have Latin and Physics; we still have Advocates and the Procurator Fiscal in our Scottish Law Courts. There are words relating to folk-lore, games and sports, dances and food; hallowe'en, curling, strathspeys, cock-a-leekie. History is revealed in the hundreds of Gaelic place-names and geographical words like glen, loch, craig and cairn; the Norsemen and the Dutch and the French have also contributed to the language with brae, croon and tassie. These examples are but a random selection, some of very early origin; nearer today Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle enriched the English language with many words which are now taken for granted, such as. raid, glamour, feckless and outcome. 'Outwith', however, is a mere Scotticism, in itself a subtle distinction.

And so, concluded Mr Walker, the Scottish language is recorded, as is proper, for it is rapidly disappearing. The Scottish national dictionary is its monument, not only for the benefit of academics but for the people too. In a sense it is the product of the people themselves, refined by scholarship but not lacking the common touch. It is there for all time for the benefit of those Scots of present and future generations who want to understand and appreciate the achievements of their forebears, which were not small.

DISCUSSION

Asked if the Dictionary continued, Mr Walker told Mr Goudie that supplements were in progress; The short Scots dictionary would appear in about seven years and work continued on the Dictionary of the older Scottish tongue. Mr Berrill mentioned Dr Johnson's 'dictionary-maker as a harmless drudge', but Mr Walker reminded him of the Doctor's great care and kindness to his poor drunken Scots scribes. Mr Vyner queried restricting 'translate' and it was agreed that the usage included academic advancement, though Mr Bakewell recalled Shakespeare and Bottom. Mrs Dainty accepted 'crown' for 'croon', and Mr Vyner 'witchcraft' or 'ghostliness' for 'glamour'. Mrs Flenley asked if there were queries from abroad, especially from America, but was told that this was not so. Mr Bradley asked about sources of locally restricted words and Mr Walker said local glossaries were a prime source and could be followed up. Mr Goudie queried the difference between a dictionary and a lexicon; Mr Walker said a dictionary was a basic word book while a lexicon was amplified, but Mrs Wallis, Mr Berrill and Mr Goudie agreed in the end that a dictionary dealt with a spoken language and a lexicon was used for words of higher scholarship. Mrs McCarthy also spoke of the differences between the written and the spoken word, and Mr Walker discussed spurious literary uses in the 19th century, saying that in general if a word was used in Scots it was in the Dictionary. Mrs Dainty quoted Alexander Grey who, in the twenties, said of Hugh MacDiarmid's Lallans period that 'the poet had dredged his jamieson for his effects but for only a comparatively short period before turning to English.
INDEXING TECHNIQUES AND STANDARDS:
THE DEVELOPING ROLE OF THE
REGISTRAR OF INDEXERS

Elizabeth J. Wallis
Registrar of the Society of Indexers

Mrs Wallis began by comparing the drama of Mr Turnbull’s address to the dramatic impact of Edinburgh itself, and commented on his dilemma in wanting to publish fine books but resenting the economic rat race that threatened his standards. She wondered if some book could be published with and without an index, to let the market show public demand. She believed there was an upturn, as enquiries for indexers had risen by 20%, with requests increasing particularly from continental publishers who, with a falling pound, were looking for people who could do a good job on time. There was no doubt that quality indexes were required; producing a bad index was dangerous to standards and she had wondered if she could ever take one to the Office of Fair Trading on the grounds that a book with a bad index was an inadequate tool.

As Registrar, Mrs Wallis had links with both indexers and publishers, and she remarked on the pattern of publishing and the Wheatley Medal awards over the last fifteen years; in five years no award was made, Cambridge University Press had published three out of eleven awarded medals, and the Athlone Press two. Such a pattern was surely not accidental. She had looked almost in vain for Scottish material on Smith’s railway bookstall, and asked about the financing and circulation of the Scots magazine. (Her audience assured her that it was popular and widely read.)

Mrs Wallis then told of enquiries she had received from an American publisher who, pleased with some work done in Inverness, had called her from Virginia with work possibilities, and after discussion it was arranged that Mr Dixon should organize those interested and reply. Mr Goudie told of an enquiry from the Netherlands, to add to Mrs Wallis’ list of Swedish and Canadian publishers with queries about periodical runs, definitive histories and books on as varied subjects as the Afrika Corps and the Queen Mother.

Mrs Wallis then dealt with a variety of problems, discussing the case of an indexer who, unable to get in touch with the publisher, did a more thorough job than was required. She also mentioned the matter of copyright, which should be covered in the contract. Mr Gordon said that such problems were being
discussed with the Publishers Association. A draft leaflet on a Guide to Publishers was circulated and Mr Bakewell commented that much remained to be done about public relations. Referring back to Mr Turnbull’s address, Mr Vyner maintained that run-on headings were not necessarily an economy ring composition. Mrs Wallis said that she sent in typewritten cards, and pointed out that, when an indexer was quick, clever, accurate and delivered on time, one could see from Mr Haig-Brown’s paper what could be done.

Turning to fees, Mrs Wallis thought that the present form of assessment was often unfair to publishers, and would suggest possible grading of indexes and indexers for suitable texts, at popular, intermediate, in-depth and possibly graduate levels. She would like to see a minimum rate per thousand words payment system, such as that used by the Institute of Linguists. This would help publishers to know what they were buying and offer some estimate of the indexer’s speed. Starting the Panel and the present Register had on the whole been effective in reducing the ‘cottage industry’ image, but now a new system was being discussed in which the Board of Assessors, in considering new aspirants to the Register, would consider the prospective indexer’s calibre rather than just two indexes. Mrs Wallis then distributed copies of Hazel Bell’s outline plan on guidance for assessment of indexes.

Mr Dixon said that indexing really was a cottage industry, and with neither a union nor power of exclusion to protect individual rates he would still prefer to see a charge by the hour, modified by size and difficulty, and the contract with the publisher made for less than a stated maximum. Mr Gordon said that the NUJ was expanding into book-publishing work, with agreements with fifteen to twenty publishing houses at rates varying from £2.85 to £1.80 an hour. The survey in progress showed that rates varied considerably. Mrs Wallis repeated her opinion and Mr Dixon spoke of a difference of measuring input and output and the problem of contracting for a product without guidelines. Mr Berrill supported Mrs Wallis; as a publisher he calculated in terms of numbers of words, and such a measure of an index would be tidy; possibly a number of entries of a particular category of work could be used to
establish a pattern of organization. Discussing rates, Mrs Dainty mentioned a rate of £3 for ten pages of text, and the problem of queries arising after work was done.

Open Forum: Open discussion had run concurrently with Mrs Wallis' address and continued during teatime, but the Forum proper began when Mr Gordon, speaking of the new, revised system of assessment, said that observations on its draft would be received in May. Mr Vyner mentioned an inadequate index, and Mrs Wallis said that such matters should be pointed out to publishers. She also quoted some inadequacies in children's reference books, but Mr Dixon said that these had shown some improvement. Mr Bradley referred to HM Stationery Office publications, and Mrs Wallis looked for improvement under a new Controller; the Official Publications were in fact using contractors for indexing.

Mrs McCarthy wondered if it was necessary to belong to the Register rather than just getting on with indexing, and Mrs Wallis emphasised the value of the Register in raising standards of work and the prestige of the Society. Mr Gordon said that he had had over 700 enquiries about membership, but serious enquirers asked about joining the Register. The important thing was to find some measure of the competence of indexers; an award of the Wheatley Medal indicated a fairly good indexer, but the balance had to be struck at 51%. Mrs Green asked about the difference between membership of the Society and the Register, and Mr Gordon said that proposals had been made to have a distinctive title, perhaps Fellow. Mr Vyner suggested 'Associate' for present members not on the Register, but Mrs Wallis pointed out that 'Associate' was often a considerable qualification. She also agreed with Mr Goudie that continuous assessment should be carried out.

There was in general inadequate briefing, editors didn't know what indexers needed to know, and indexers were isolated. Mrs McCarthy felt communication was the problem, but though Mrs Wallis thought the numbers of publishers moving out of London would reduce this, several members had greater doubts about the efficiency of the postal services. Mr Vyner mentioned a mistake in the index of BS 3700 as an example of the difficulty of checking the proofs of one's own index. This was endorsed by Mr Gordon, who emphasized the value of mutual criticism and revision. Mr Gordon and Mrs Wallis discussed the value of BS 3700 as a basis for general conformity within the Society and the need for self-discipline by indexers in overcoming obstacles of time, money, and domestic problems. Mrs McCarthy mentioned physical capacity as a factor, and Mrs Dainty estimated that she had read one difficult text three times, certainly more often than the editor. Decline in printers' standards was discussed by Mrs Wallis.

BOOK REVIEWS


This survey of compulsory cataloguing courses in accredited library schools in North America, based on a questionnaire circulated in 1973, finds adherence to a very narrow, traditional syllabus, lack of interaction between syllabus and what is going on in libraries and of consultation with working librarians, and lack of opportunity for teachers to bring their own experience up to date through periods of work in libraries. Apart from the last—the deplorable lack of sabbatical leave, which is as necessary for a teacher of cataloguing as of any other subject—I suspect that the formality of the questionnaire itself had some influence on the conformity and rigidity of the replies.

There is not space here to write in detail of the survey's findings, nor of the few 'special' schools picked out for comment because of their broader curriculum. Some of the lacunae in the syllabus which the survey points out are undoubtedly made good by other, though possibly not all compulsory, courses in the curriculum, as is shown by the survey of current courses on indexing in North American institutions contributed to the last issue of The Indexer (April 1977) by James D. Anderson, himself a teacher at one of the schools surveyed by Alan Thomas. Lack of formal consultation with other members of the library profession does not preclude the flow of reports, catalogues and brochures with which librarians are kind enough to keep school staff aware of what is going on, nor prevent the exchange of information when teachers meet informally with practising cataloguers, librarians who are not cataloguers, and old students, all of whom are ready to bring the teacher up to date and broaden his horizons.

There being less widespread interest in classification in North America than in this country (though the need for categorical, or 'facet', analysis in thesaurus construction is expanding interest), classification studies are frequently restricted to the two schemes which are North American standards. Alan Thomas, who is a teacher at the Ealing School of Librarianship, would prefer comparative study of a wider range of schemes, leading to a better grasp of fundamental theory, and hence to more imaginative practice. He makes suggestions for an ideal curriculum, both responsive to and leading the library field.

Mary Piggott