

Shoebox, international: Newsletters of the affiliated societies



American Society of Indexers (nos. 62, 63)

No. 62 covers the 1983 ASI Annual Meeting, at which Mauro Pittaro was succeeded as President by Dorothy Thomas; a fifteenth-birthday cake was shared by all, and several past Presidents honoured. Mr Pittaro was able to report on a successful year: over 200 votes had been cast in the election for officers, and two candidates had been nominated for each office; there were 490 individual and five institutional members, as well as the first in the new category of student members; three new chapters were in formation to add to the three already in existence, and three more areas were showing interest in chapter-formation. Dorothy Thomas, in an eloquent acceptance speech, spoke of the Board's determination to find, and to serve equally, all indexers wherever located; to explore new ways of liaising and sharing with other organizations; to redefine, if necessary, the roles of 'indexer' and 'data base constructor'; to ask for all meetings to be taped for borrowing by other chapters; to hold 'national' meetings outside New York. Acknowledging the contribution made to ASI by its members over the years, she said: 'Work for professional organizations is volunteer work of the highest order. It requires a kind of thoughtful effort, and consistent concern for a level of excellency that is being measured in a competitive occupational world'.

The business meeting was followed by a speakers' program on Indexing Changes Since 1968, covering the fields of academic, corporate and freelance indexing. All three speakers outlined the changes brought about by new technology; Elliot Linzer, for the freelancers, addressed himself also to some social implications: the orientation of data bases to a 'ruling class' of institutions, and the censorship of indexes by some boards of education (the unacceptable face of democracy?), had been among factors causing him to wonder whether the indexers of tomorrow would, as in the past, serve to increase access to information, or would find themselves hindering that access. The following day saw an enlarged and highly successful rerun of the February Computers in Indexing meeting which had been severely affected by the 'blizzard of '83'. Much software was described and demonstrated, including Bookdex, Journaldex, FMA, Compugramma's Micro Indexing System, D-Base II,

The Write Idea (dealt with fully later in the Newsletter) and Inindex; addresses to write to are included in the article.

No H. W. Wilson Award was made in 1983, the panel judging that all the 15 eligible entries were flawed in some way; the Board is considering and inviting ways to persuade publishers and others to submit more entries. (Have you indexed any books, in English, which were copyrighted in the US in 1983?)

'Question and Answer' explores some criteria for using prepositions in index entries. 'The Electronic Shoebox' discusses the BNS Computer Assisted Indexing System for the Commodore, and, briefly, Indexor (addresses to write to supplied).

Reviewers give short shrift to *Indexes, abstracts and digests: a classified bibliography*, 801 pages apparently produced by allowing a computer to run riot in the Library of Congress, yielding the expected idiocies (abstract algebra, cost-of-living index). However, they rather like the same publisher's (Gale Research Co) *The Storyteller's sourcebook: a subject, title and motif index to folklore collections for children* (and was anybody thinking of giving me a \$45 book token please?).

A correspondent suggests that Indexers Can Help You Find It would be an improved slogan for ASI, since it would make clear that 'most of all we index for index users'. An ASI Yearbook is being prepared, and a brochure to advertise publications. Finally, there are four questionnaires (two reprinted from earlier issues), dealing with Microcomputer Use, entries for the Register of Indexers, reactions to the Newsletter, and Indexer Economics.

No. 63 announces that Linda Cooper has taken over as Editor of the Newsletter. (This reader has always found it a stimulating and innovative journal; she would like to express her whole-hearted approval of the new layout.) We note that the Board will be investigating how ASI members use *The Indexer*. There are short autobiographies of all four ASI officers, inaugurating a series of Board profiles.

Many articles explore further the many fruitful topics broached in no. 62. 'Question and Answer' is again devoted to prepositions in index-headings. Robert J. Palmer suggests as a guideline: If the subheading is a logical division of the main entry, and it is a noun, a preposition should always be used (war/prevention of); if the sub-heading is part of a list, a preposition should never be used (Rome/catacombs). Barbara M. Preschel

thinks the guideline useful but feels that context and judgment must after all be the final arbiters. (As so often, it seems, in attempts to lay down all but the simplest rules for indexers.)

'Electronic Shoebox' discusses Answer, described as 'an information-handling program . . . the next generation beyond data base management programs', which a correspondent uses for book and serial indexing (address supplied). Continued discussion of hardware and its costs highlights the 'printer buffer', a fairly inexpensive gadget which frees the fast computer from the slow printer so that they can work simultaneously but at their own speeds.

Theodore Hines, a founder of ASI, has died; his obituary appears in this journal.

The review section notes a facsimile edition of *The 1812 catalog of the Library of Congress*. In addition to author and title indexes, there is an index by date of publication, spanning the period 1577 to 1812. In 1814 the British attacked the Capitol and the entire library went up in flames. (British indexers may here wish to bow their heads in shame for a few minutes, and perhaps be grateful that we were not sufficiently advanced to get to Alexandria first . . .)

The issue includes a most informative ASI Organization Profile and Directory, 1983-4.

We note that the National Federation of Abstracting and Indexing Services is issuing a refurbished and expanded Newsletter.



Australian Society of Indexers

(Vol. 7, nos. 3, 4)

No. 3 summarizes a talk given to members on the compilation of the Oxford dictionaries. We learn with interest that cards are still preferred to a computerized data base for this work, and that among specialized fields being researched is that of words related to glue-sniffing.

An article reviews some information-retrieval software. Data base management systems, including D-base II, suffer particularly from the rigidity of fixed-size fields, but this problem is beginning to find solutions. The author mentions Notebook, Cardbox and PFS:File; she finds the idea of automatic indexing with Docu-Mate/Plus particularly challenging (she has not apparently worked with any of these programs). This issue also reprints Campbell Purton's short article on the 'threat' posed by computers from *Microindexer 1* (Society of Indexers, 1983).

An article by Jeremy Fisher, originally written for the *Sydney morning herald*, is entitled 'Shock an Indexer: Notice Him'; it evaluates the indexing policy of several Australian publishers.

The Editor announces that the future of both the *Australian book review index* and the *Australian newspaper index* now appears uncertain, because of shortage of funds. On the question of an index to the AusSI Newsletter itself, he doubts whether one is required, but invites members' comments.

We note that the New South Wales Registrar-General's Department has issued a microfiche version of the *Index to births, marriages and deaths pre-1900*. Others please copy.

In no. 4 there are notes of a talk on Records Management. UNIVAC, the first commercial computer, was 'huge, hot and always blowing tubes'. 20 years later, information had been recognized as a resource of the same order as the traditional 'men, money and materials'. Management greatly under-used this resource, but had nevertheless 'abdicated from making decisions, leaving these to the technicians'. The speaker stressed the importance of optical discs which can hold up to 54,000 documents on one side: the need for precise indexing was evident. He felt that the near future would be a time of revolutionary rather than evolutionary change.

A new sub-division of AusSI has been set up in the Canberra area: a local indexing course is to be initiated, and it is hoped that further activities will develop from this. Jean Hagger describes the Bristol Conference; the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services is anxious to further the indexing of nineteenth-century Australian periodicals; shortage of funds means that the Australian Science Index will no longer be published, though it is hoped that much of its information may be otherwise available.

There is some detailed correspondence about software, especially Index4, which mentions also the British purpose-designed programs (*see* section on Society of Indexers, below). Both issues carry advertisements for Index4.

Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada/Société Canadienne pour l'Analyse de Documents

(Vol. 6, nos. 2, 3)

No. 2 opens with an account of a triumphant 1983 annual meeting in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Speakers had covered: the indexing of learning resources; the indexing of artefacts, with a discussion of the Pictorial and Artifact Retrieval Information System (PARIS); the indexing of land information by the Land Registration

and Information Service; and the abstracting of materials for a bibliography of the Nova Scotia Empire Loyalists. This work was funded, till the funds ran out, by the Provincial Employment Program. The authors discuss the social and professional implications of this type of 'make-work' funding. 'You must . . . be concerned lest [this system] bring the profession of indexing and abstracting into both penury and disrepute.' Readers may be only too aware that the new 'convict indexing' (in *The Indexer* 12 (1), 27-8, Joseph Drazan wrote of 'Convict indexing' considered in the 1880s in the pages of *The Nation*, and in issue 13 (2), 85, J. S. W. Gibson reported that prisoners in a Gloucestershire gaol 'have been working for some years on a project [indexing] which now covers three-quarters of the county, available on slips at the Gloucestershire Record Office') and the questions it raises are not peculiar to Canada.

Full texts of the last two addresses appear in Newsletter No. 2.

At the business meeting the President reported that the administration of the society is to be moved from Ottawa to Toronto. The society is hoping to revise some of its publications; Ottawa members are to review the indexing of the *Canada Gazette*; proposals for formal liaison with ASI are to be put to the members; IASC/SCAD are considering holding their next annual meeting in conjunction with another society of similar aims and interests.

A Toronto Group meeting had heard a talk about information retrieval on videotex. It was suggested that the 'tree-structure' approach (from general terms progressing to specific), despite its apparent simplicity for the user, did present certain difficulties. The frame-size limited the size of the menu and the scope of the descriptive material; if a wrong route was chosen, the user might suppose that the information sought was not in the system; where various independent sources fed the system, there might be disparate treatment in different sections; provision of 'browsing' facilities and the addition of supplementary 'location pages' were difficult and expensive.

There is a report from the ASI's annual meeting. The correspondent was prompted by the talk on automatic indexing in the academic field to wonder whether text as well as titles might be manipulated to suit the needs of automatic indexing, and what ethical considerations might be raised by such a development.

No. 3 begins with an account by Peter Greig of the Bristol Conference, and of the indexing course which preceded it. The course had included an overview by a guest-speaker of some inexpensive computer hardware and software: Sinclair Spectrum; Vu-File and Master-File.

There is a profile of the information-storage of the Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional

Research from the point of view of the IASC/SCAD member who is designing its bilingual thesaurus.

The Toronto Group had held a meeting on micro-computers which included a presentation on the indexes for the Resource Centre of a local college and some problems presented by various programs considered.



Society of Indexers

(Summer 1983, with *Microindexer* 2; Autumn 1983)

The Secretary rejoices at the success of the Bristol Conference, and is able to announce that plans are afoot for the next one, in the North of England in 1985 or 1986. (Am preparing to work my passage by any means available.) She thanks members for their donations. (2½% of all fees earned by means of the Register or the list of *Indexers available* circulated annually to all publishers is paid as 'commission' to SI.)

A member is preparing a report on collaboration with authors: in the knowledge that authors often cannot afford to pay for a whole index to be made, he feels that other professional indexers might, like himself, correct authors' indexes and offer skilled advice, thus improving index quality, assisting authors, and increasing their own income.

With the Summer issue came *Microindexer*, now fully fledged. Its new editor, Bernard Smith, provides a helpful and good-humoured editorial stressing the importance of knowing software really well before trying to meet deadlines with it. There is a summary of two linked meetings of SI at which purpose-designed aids to micro-indexing were described and demonstrated by their creators (all SI members). Comdex, Micrex and Macrex, and Microindex, are software especially made for book-indexing and related work. They vary slightly, but the programmers have all clearly addressed themselves to the problems of making real indexes, and are perhaps among the first to provide in their various ways what we have all been waiting for. Choice of alphabetization system; choice between indenting and running on; justification to desired line-length; abbreviation option for frequently-used terms; merging of identical entries; continuous editing facilities; option to ignore chemical prefixes etc for alphabetization: all or most of these are among the features of all these programs.

Microindex is also used, by Farestead Associates, to offer an 'indexing service': 'the indexer enters his terms on a proforma, in columns for main heading, sub-heading, see-reference etc, and posts the lot to Farestead, who return it shortly as a beautifully set-out printout, together with a bill'.

Book Machine is a whole authors' and publishers' micro-system, soon to be put on the market; complete with special sorts, pagination facility, wide choice of type size and style (displayed on the screen as printed), split screen for proof-comparison, etc; with an indexing program, compiled after consultation with indexers, thrown in.

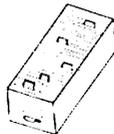
The fruitful and wide-ranging discussions produced many points of interest: one could expect to save from 30% to 50% of time compared with manual indexing; index updating and revision particularly benefited from the use of a computer; it might be of benefit to publishers to lend indexers computers; the compatibility problem should be solved within two or three years. The cost of equipment (or of using an indexing service) would be tax-deductible; bank loans (possibly favourable Business Development loans) should be easily obtainable. Full details of addresses and prices are included.

Microindexer 2 also contains 'user-reports' on Micrex and Macrex, and a descriptive article by the originators of these two programs. It is hoped that future issues may carry similar articles on other products. The magazine will be an occasional publication for the present, issued as material accumulates.

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We learn with regret that the attempt by Gerald Fowler to start an Indexers' Group in New Zealand has after all failed to find sufficient support. Hail—but not, we trust, farewell; *au revoir* perhaps?

J.L.B.



Reviews quoted in our previous issue praised the meticulously detailed, giant index to Robert Latham's edition of *The diary of Samuel Pepys*. By contrast, what terseness is displayed in the main-character entry for the Everyman's Library edition of this work (Dent, 1906):

Pepys, Samuel, Vol. I: 1 January 1660–31 March 1664; Vol. II: 1 April 1664–30 June 1667; Vol. III: 1 July 1667–31 May 1669.

The Bookseller, 1 October 1983, reports sales of nearly 10,000 copies of Robert Latham's *Index to The diary of Samuel Pepys* (Bell & Hyman, 1983, £19.50) in its first six months. The volume even reached a number of bestseller lists: truly a star among indexes!

Obituary

Theodore C. Hines

We are very sorry to learn of the death, on 25 June 1983, of Theodore C. Hines (Ted to his friends, and as he signed his letters), Professor of Library Information Science/Educational Technology at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

He became a member of the Society of Indexers in 1961–2, within three years of its formation, and was an industrious participator in the practice of indexing and the development of its methodology by computer and later by microcomputer.

In conjunction with Jessie L. Harris and Lois Winkel, he wrote articles on these subjects, which appeared in *The Indexer*, 7 (2) Autumn 1970 and 11 (4) Oct. 1979 respectively. An article previously written by himself, when on the staff of the School of Library Service at Columbia University, New York, 'A computer code for alphabetizing', was in *The Indexer* 5 (1) Spring 1966.

Ted Hines, with R. J. Palmer, Dr Jessie L. Harris, and others, was largely responsible for the formation in 1968 of the American Society of Indexers, and he was one of its six Directors from 1971–6.

Judging from what I have read about him, and from his letters, he was a very hard-working professor, stimulating, encouraging and collaborating with his students, and constantly finding more efficient ways of indexing. He and I were hoping to meet when I was in New York briefly after attending the IFLA Conference at Toronto in 1967, but, regrettably, he found at the last moment that his schedule was too tight for this to be possible.

The development of indexing practices, and the training of indexers, may suffer temporarily from his passing, but his stimulation and past endeavours will nevertheless continue to be beneficial in the years to come.

L. M. Harrod

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As we go to press, we learn with deep regret of the death on 12 March 1984 of Leonard Montague Harrod, Vice-President of the Society of Indexers, and for fourteen years Editor of *The Indexer*. An obituary will appear in our next issue.