No. 67 opens with the inaugural address of the new President of ASI, Hans Wellisch. He calculates that if all the books published in the USA and requiring indexes were to be indeed provided with them, and all those indexes compiled by members of ASI, the resulting workload would be intolerable; notes that many indexers, particularly those working with data bases, have no links with ASI and may indeed not see themselves as having much in common with ‘old-fashioned drudges’ shuffling bits of card in old shoeboxes, and that many indexes that are provided come from non-professional, frequently incompetent, hands. He concludes that ASI must seek to enhance its image further (while recognizing the considerable progress already made in this direction) and to bind more closely all whose interests lie in the application of good indexing techniques. On the subject of research in indexing fields, Dr Wellisch draws attention to the volume of recent work on the design of indexing languages, and to the paucity of research into index use; mentions the fruitful thesis of an ASI member, Dr Bella Weinberg, which had shown that the mere extraction of keywords from titles, abstracts or full text could not, however ‘hard’ the terminology, create a useful index; in conclusion asks all teachers of indexing to encourage more such research into the production and use of indexes.

The 1984 AGM, held in Washington, had centred on the effect of computers on indexes and indexing; C. David Batty had informed and amused with a history of mechanized indexing from edge-notched cards onwards, and Carol Risher had spoken of the Electronic Publishing Project. The Wilson Award had been presented to Mary Fields and the Indexing staff of Information Handling Services of Englewood, Colorado (as detailed in the section on indexing awards in this issue of The Indexer). The results of the ASI Board elections were announced; all the candidates had been unopposed, which led to some discussion at the meeting and to a long letter in the Newsletter: Peter Rooney, a former Secretary and Executive Secretary, disputes the constitutionality of this election, and asks for the Constitution to be revised, so that its provisions may be ‘followed, not evaded’. In a detailed reply, the President states that efforts had been made to adhere to the Constitution, but it had been found difficult to solicit sufficient volunteers; however, the Constitution was in process of being amended and it was expected that a Special Meeting would take place early in 1985 to ratify a new Constitution. The outgoing President’s Annual Report is printed: Dorothy Thomas welcomes the growing strength of the ‘chapter’ system, and affirms the need for ASI to devote more financial resources to this forging of bonds between members, to which end exploratory meetings had been arranged with representatives of SI, The Indexer forming—as with all our societies—a major item of expenditure. (In no. 68 the first results of this meeting are announced: the affiliation fee is abolished for all societies.) The Newsletter is to be redesigned, the remuneration of indexers working with computers is being considered, and ASI hopes to interest a publisher in sponsoring an award for serial indexing comparable with the Wilson Award for non-serial works.

The index to the Newsletter is nearly complete; ASI is investigating the possibility of microfilming the whole run of the Newsletter and publishing it with the index. ‘Question and Answer’ deals with the Electronic Publishing Project (described in The Indexer 14 (2), 115); it is expected, according to the respondents to a questionnaire distributed by EPP to publishers and others, that by 1985, in the US: 60% of publishers will ask authors to submit manuscripts in electronic form; 100% of indexers replying will be submitting electronic manuscripts; more than 60% of manuscripts will contain typographic or generic coding; almost 40% of publishers will ask authors to tag manuscripts; 60% of the indexers have already been asked to tag a manuscript, or to key it in a prescribed format; more than 50% of the authors and indexers will have the ability to telecommunicate their manuscripts. One group was investigating for EPP the identification of data elements useful for bibliographic control. Barbara Preschel concludes by raising the central question of who is to do the tagging for the index, together with the possibility of a drop in the number of indexers and the need for indexers not to lose financially while publishers lower costs.

The ‘Electronic Shoebox’ quotes some indexers who use various word-processing and sorting programs rather than specific indexing programs; it seems that many US indexers have not yet found software tailored adequately
to their needs, in particular software which will alphabetize and allow editing 'as you go along'. Linda Fetters offers in reply various programs which do fulfill these conditions. A report on the National Information Standards Organization (NISO or Z39) mentions the revision of *Basic criteria for indexes* and *Writing abstracts*; a newsletter, *Voice of Z39*, is available free of charge. Please note that from June 1 1984 ASI members with modems have been able to communicate by way of an electronic bulletin board: just dial (301) 424-5817. The password is ASI... A member in a radio interview, asked, 'What is the worst part of the job?' replied, 'One of the worst parts is when you get a book that isn't real fascinating to you in the first place. And you've read through it once and then all the rest of the time that you work on that book, you're not really learning anything [nor are you] stimulated by it.' She also cites the dissatisfaction of having to cut a 'natural index' by half to fit a limited space. In 'What's New', Hans Wellisch commends *Simply stated*, the free newsletter of the Document Design Center, for a long article on the importance of indexes. He praises also *Prefixes and other word-initial elements of English*, edited by Laurence Urdang and Alexander Humez, a comprehensive dictionary of origins and usage with a large index. However, Gale Research Company's *Idioms and phrases index*, which provides not definitions but references to locations in other reference-books, is just the sort of prey on which Dr Wellisch loves to lavish his best invective.

No. 68 is the redesigned Newsletter, as promised: folded and centre-stapled to make an A4 'book' (the earlier Newsletters were single A4 sheets, stapled at one corner), with a greater variety of type faces and sizes—some of its italic headings are positively elegant, and in general the layout presents a more spacious appearance. I wonder whether it may prove possible to avoid completing the 'President's Column' (always started on page one) half-way through the Newsletter; I find this practice confusing. The revised Constitution, to be known in the future as the By-laws, is printed for the consideration of members, and Dorothy Thomas contributes a thoughtful article on the electoral procedure and practice of ASI (they have a nominating committee); the crux of her argument, gracefully expressed, is that you shouldn't grumble about those who do the work unless you are prepared to work yourself: 'When the call goes out this year, offer to serve!'

'Chapter News' contains an account of a Washington meeting at which four local indexers spoke of their current projects; this format proved very popular. The 'Profile' deals with the Twin Oaks Indexing Collective: in 1981, the Twin Oaks Community, of Virginia, which had survived and flourished since the utopian 60s, added to its manufacture of hammocks and rope chairs a new source of income. A group of ex-teachers and other members of the commune, tutored and supported by a professional indexer and university librarian, set up business as an indexing collective. They work as a team: one, the 'honcho', marks up the text, a carder takes the pages as they are completed, transfers the information on to cards and files them. The honcho edits roughly, then gives the cards to a typist who transfers the entries to a word-processor and passes the printout on to the proof-reader. Finance and publicity is handled by a manager. The process is apparently fast and efficient, can handle more than one book at a time, and could adapt well to serial indexing and general editorial services. The collective is working for various publishers, including the State Department, and is considering computerization. 'Electronic Shoebox' deals with a different aspect of post-industrial America: telecommuting, or the electronic cottage. Linda Fetters receives text from her publisher's computer via her telephone and a modem linked to her own computer. This informative article gives much detail on modems, associated software, and the various facilities for keeping isolated cottagers in touch with the numerous others who work at home doing a great variety of jobs; the point is also made, and may interest many editors, that modems are an ideal method of getting copy in from far-flung contributors.

An application form for ASI's Register offers comprehensive lists of Related Services, Categories, and Subjects, of which members may mark up to 15 items, to be entered in the Register's four indexes; each member is also allowed 25 words to amplify his/her entry.

'Question and Answer' explores lucidly some more of the differences between data base indexing and book-indexing: most books are designed primarily to be used not for information-retrieval, but for serial reading; the several elements of a particular concurrence of circumstances must be searched severally in the hope of finding the location where they come together. A data base index should allow the elements to be pre-assembled and searched together; if the search has been sufficiently narrowed, access will be immediate. A data base index may also allow negative retrieval (e.g., *not* by Charles Dickens; *not* published before 1980) and will often index bibliographic data and other elements not usually found in book-indexes. (On the other hand, the last thing anyone would want to do with a data base would, perhaps, be to read it from one end to the other.)

The 1985 Annual Meeting is to be held in Philadelphia. The cumulative index to the Newsletter *will* be in microfiche and microfilm form, as well as in a printed version. The Lawyers Cooperative Publishing Company has joined ASI as a Sustaining Member. The Newsletter reproduces an advertisement and quotes a sales brochure from the publishers of the latest Wilson Award (award-winning indexes sell books). 'What's New' has fun quoting two 'horrible indexes'; notes the forthcoming conversion of the OED into a machine-readable data
base; deplots a bilingual index that apparently con-
found confusion in a work describing a classification
system for non-text material which in itself seems to be
'classification gone haywire, and more's the pity,
because the first edition of this work was simple and
eminently workable. Moral: if it ain't broke, don't fix it'.
Dr Wellisch also gives some examples, from a recent
Italian work on the history of bibliometrics, of Robert
Grosseteste's 13th century concordance to the Bible and
its commentators, in which concepts are indexed as
symbols (a dot for the unity of God, a triangle for the
Trinity, a little wheel for Eternity); a delightful, if
eminently workable. Moral: if it ain't broke, don't fix it'.

Dr Fisher considers that updating may not be
possible workable— but which
perhaps might be considered again with the expansion of
computer graphics? This issue's cartoon has two juxta-
posed drawings: a freelance indexer at work (with desk,
telephone and shoebox) and a freelance indexer on
vacation (with sunbed, seagulls and shoebox).

Australian Society of Indexers
(Vol. 8, nos. 3, 4)

No. 3 begins with the text of a talk given by Jeremy
Fisher, the indexer of The Australian encyclopaedia. He
had been required to some extent to justify an index
which had been criticized by reviewers (see The Indexer
14 (2), 117). Mr Fisher had given up a more remunerative
job when excited by the challenge of working on the
Encyclopaedia. The idea of indexing direct to the title of
an entry (McGuire, John see Bushranging) was rejected,
but the selected system kept the format of referral to an
entry, and to a specific paragraph of an entry, rather
than to volume and page: for ease of compilation (the
index could be made as contributions came in), of
updating, and of use; it does indeed seem that users,
though initially taken aback by such references as
PIGO20, learn quickly to use them (the index numbers
are printed in blue in the text) and are glad to be directed
to the right paragraph without needing to search a large
page. Mr Fisher considers that updating may not be
greatly aided by the system, but that transferral to an on-
line form will be simplified. He is appreciative of the
efforts of the editor to secure an index and ensure its
success, and entertaining on the problems of pro-
gramming and coding and on the more diverting contents
of the Encyclopaedia. During the ensuing discussion he
stressed that any other type of index would have been too
costly to produce; and that the computer's 'inability to

Reviewing the Australian library and information
science abstracts, G. R. T. Levick concludes that its
index, like many designed primarily with machine-based
searching in mind, has especially in print an air of con-
descension: 'we have done our best for you, they say, it is
this or no index at all, everything is a compromise . . . I
have every sympathy for users who feel that most of the
compromising is done at their expense'. B. J. Walby,
reviewing the index to Electronic publishing abstracts,
invokes more strongly against the practice of printing at
the back of a book an index designed for computer-
searching, the crime being aggravated in this case by the
omission of useful terms as well as the inclusion of
useless ones: 'Executive guide to data communications'
has all four main words as single index entries, while
'data communications' does not appear; and so on down
the well trodden paths of such reviews. He concludes
happily by quoting the entry 'addition', referring to the
following sentence: 'In addition, management must
consider word-processing's future trends'; to which he
adds, 'Amen to that and the index, which should have
remained buried somewhere in a computer's memory'.

The 'Indexes mentioned in reviews' section cites a
gazetteer of 40,000 names which refers not to grid
squares within the 148 maps, but only to latitude and
longitude. Commenting on the slow response to a request
to members to give their views on indexing charges, the
Editor allows a touch of bitterness to emerge: 'All our
readers must be indexing free of charge or perhaps they
are all so busy with commissions that they have no time
to contribute any views'.

In no. 4 we have the text of a talk by J. Goddard, who
describes the work of the Information Management and
Consulting Association, and discusses some of the free-
lance's problems in negotiating contracts and setting
fees. The membership of IMCA includes salaried, free-
lance, and both together; it aims to support and provide
interaction between information professionals in many
fields, and to suggest a standard of conduct for its
members. Its best known activity is the publication of an
'Information Consultants, Freelancers and Brokers
Directory', which includes some indexers. Mr Goddard
notes that membership is open to all, with equal status;
that he is personally rather cynical about the extent to
which formal qualifications guarantee attitude, integrity
or practical ability; but that the need to strive for the
establishment of standards is likely to lead to some
limitation on membership at a later date. Addressing
himself to the business side of freelancing, he indicates
the distinction between making it known that one is
available for work and actively promoting one's services,
and notes the diffidence of many freelances, who would
find it easier to be brash and assertive about a parent
organization. Indicating the disadvantages of pricing
one's work too high or too low, he suggests that it is best to work for the 'standard rate'; the problem is that it can be difficult to find out what is the standard rate.

AusSI itself, as noted earlier, has been canvassing its members' views on fees, and has had, we learn with pleasure, enough response to quote some of these and draw some tentative conclusions. Some members' comments are very interesting, and no doubt reflect experiences common to many of us: (on the difficulty of setting a fee in advance) 'each index I've done has turned out to be sui generis'; 'in some cases the most realistic basis for negotiation is simply to ask how much money they have left for the index and claim that, however risible'; (on feeling obliged to charge less than other indexers) 'I worry that I'm somehow letting the Society down . . . On the other hand, if one believes in indexes and enjoys making them, perhaps one should apply the hedonist principles and expect to pay for one's pleasures'; (on multi-author works) 'Should one consider a special loading? . . . variant vocabularies . . . can make such works more like serials from the indexer's choice-of-heading point of view'; 'a set sum has been offered and one either takes it or leaves it'; 'the recommended minimum rate is for works of low information density . . . the tendency will be for the publisher to use [word-processors instead of] indexers in the case of simple indexes, and therefore the minimum rate recommended by the Society should perhaps be raised to apply to works of medium information density instead of low'. AusSI has decided to discontinue the recommending of rates per 1000 words, and to introduce by gradual stages over the next three years an hourly rate notionally equivalent to rates paid to indexers in full-time employment; they will support this increase by a campaign of education. The average actual rates earned by Australian freelances stand at about half those envisaged for the future.

A reviewer of Collins Australian encyclopaedia (no relation of the encyclopaedia discussed earlier in this article) is quoted as regretting there being no index to the subject index—surely we all know indexes like that. More regrets, this time redounding to the credit of our profession and to that of the Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies: the judges for the annual Alexander Award for family history found the value of many entries diminished by the lack of an index. 'In the opinion of the judges, it is a cardinal sin for any non-fiction work to lack an index, and one is particularly necessary in a genealogical volume'. The winning book (Freedom found: a history of the Alts family in Australia by Helen Colliver) has 'that crowning glory—an excellent index'.
familiar and unresolved disadvantages of tree-structure indexing and menu-driven searching are explored: browsing is clumsy, peripheral vision is non-existent; 'It becomes hard to know where you are in relation to where you have come from . . . How much tolerance will the public have?' Considering the content of videotex, Dr Schabas notes that, while nothing is more disillusioning than being presented with yesterday's weather report, the real dangers lie in information that is out of date or incorrect without the viewer knowing it; the reliability and truth of videotex information depend on the ceaseless, conscientious vigilance of those who supply the data base. She considers that the limitations on size and format make videotex particularly vulnerable to bias, whether deliberate or inadvertent: 'The pressure to accommodate a knowledge data base in a logical tree structure of very small information units encourages a single treatment of each subject which I find frightening. A related issue is the temptation to oversimplification, to appeal to the lowest common denominator of users.'

The Secretary asks members to send details of projects in which they are involved; the members' list is printed; and as a supplement the Bulletin prints a revised version of Peter Greig's 'So you want to index' of 1980. This is a comprehensive introduction to the business, useful to all beginners in the English-speaking world; the booklet includes bibliographies, Standards, manuals, journals and two (American) books on freelancing, and there are sections on career prospects, training courses (though Mr Greig warns: 'Essentially indexing can only be learned through actual experience and by actual practice'), fees, and professional ethics. He quotes a 'key clause' from the ASI Guidelines and specifications: 'It is the responsibility of the indexer to accept only work for which (s)he is qualified. The indexer shall plan, specify and maintain the quality of the index. The work shall be accomplished in a professional manner'.

Despite the invitation in No. 1, there are as yet no articles in French (though how would all those accents be fitted into the Ontarian Minuscule typeface?).

Toni Olshen's paper (from the 1984 Annual Meeting) on one publisher's view of changing technologies, entitled pleasantly 'Killing one bird with two stones', is reproduced. Ms Olshen describes how printed indexes are created for Canadian Business Index and Canadian News Index, how the two data bases are merged to form the new Canadian Business and Current Affairs (CBCA) Database, online on Dialog, and how the merged indexes are adapted to serve the new method of search. The project has been made feasible by better software, which allows, for instance, less cumbersome proofreading; even so, the editor's need to balance quality, cost and currency (CBCA is updated monthly) must remain. The publishers, Micromedia, are satisfied that they are achieving a satisfactory level in all three, and there is some interesting detail on the freelance indexers' growing expertise in this dual-purpose task: 'Enhancement of titles takes on a greater significance. When only in print, we enhanced titles to clarify meaning or to supply information that would allow the title to stand alone. Now enhancement has become a means to provide searchable terms not provided by the controlled vocabulary.' A valuable training session 'exposed the indexers to the product of their labours'; the publishers are 'exploring ways to provide more access points online without over-inflating the printed version.'

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Society of Indexers
(no. 3, 1984; no. 4, 1984)

No. 3, written in July 1984, is the last from the inimitable pen of Cecil Robertson, and it seems fitting that this is one of her liveliest and most innovative. The dotted line above a tear-off form is embellished with a drawing of a pair of scissors (since this issue also preceded the end of SI's old duplicator such additions may be harder to accomplish in future), while two items of special urgency are marked in the margin by a rubber stamp impression of a red elephant (these achieved manually, of course, by some 1400 energetic wrist-movements). The first red elephant accompanies notice of a meeting to hear members' views on the accreditation of indexers, in particular the views of those who are not Registered, and invites written comments from those unable to be present. Notice of the AGM includes a spirited exhortation to members to nominate for Council: 'I have not seldom heard Council described as self-propagating, back-scratching, incestuous etc . . .' (so please nominate and vote). There is an enticing invitation to SI's Durham Conference (5-7 July, 1985); some pertinent advice on tax for the self-employed, information on the Publishing and bookselling directory, in which members may apply for a free entry; and the second red elephant makes its appearance to add power to a reminder that the minimum recommended rate has been raised: 'However often I report that the . . . rate has altered, is altering, is about to alter, officers still get queries from members who claim to have heard of nothing more recent than the last rate but 5'. The issue ends with the last dozen lines of the anonymous poem from which an extract was quoted in an earlier Newsletter: ' . . . And Z for zest with which I trust we'll all promote ourselves'.

No. 4 is edited by Hilda Pearson, the Information Officer. Much information and invitation is given in a spacious layout. There are notices about the AGM; the Library Association Conference and exhibition, at which SI had a stand; a book by Ken Bakewell on sources of management information; and the availability of back numbers of The Indexer at reduced rates. It ends ruefully: 'Sorry, no elephants this time . . .'; but is accompanied by a paper on tax (by Ken Bakewell) which begins with advice to be frank, adds a detailed list of items that may be set against lax, and concludes with an annotated bibliography.

J.L.B.

INDEXERS IN FICTION

The image of the indexer?

For this twelfth instalment in our series, let us look back over the whole to see the overall image of the indexer that novels offer.

An earlier example in fact was featured in The Indexer 7 (1) Spring 1970, 19-20, where Margaret Anderson wrote of Conan Doyle's classic detective, Sherlock Holmes, as an indexer. She traced many references to the cuttings and index volumes Holmes compiled, quoting 'So spake Sherlock Holmes, and turned back to the great scrap book in which he was arranging and indexing some of his recent material', and,

'Holmes sat moodily at one side of the fire, cross-indexing his records of crime'.

She concluded, 'Holmes was a successful indexer. He was industrious and painstaking, as all indexers must be, and, aided by his remarkable memory, his filing system never failed him'.

Holmes is the earliest and most famous indexer we have found in fiction. Those in our subsequent series fall into somewhat dismaying categories. There are several diffident, genteel ladies who attempt the task (in the books of Howard, Pym and Thirkell); fallen pedants (father of the classic butler in Parkinson's Jeeves, 'eccentric, shabby, learned and normally drunk'); the frankly insane (Charles Kinbote, Nabokov's weird editor/indexer in Pale fire, who provides such index entries as

Glitterntin, Mt., a splendid mountain in the Bera Range (q.v.); pity I may never climb it again)

and even the murderous. Professor Hissey in Innes' The weight of the evidence is hastening to complete his card index before the forces of justice interrupt his work. (But it is gratifying to note that the spectacle of this indexing causes the inspector to feel 'that he was at last gaining a convincing breath of that higher and rarefied air which academic persons are supposed wontedly to breathe'.)

Overall, the attitude to indexers in fiction is distinctly patronizing. 'Some donkey work that didn't involve intelligence but that had to be done', is how Elizabeth Jane Howard's heroine envisages the task. Barbara Pym frequently refers to 'a thankless task' allotted to authors' wives or female friends. One such is persuaded to the work with, 'Reading proofs for a long stretch gets a little boring. The index would make a nice change for you'. Angela Thirkell's indexer displays merely amiable incompetence. More flattering and, we hope, realistic is the