The President of ASI, in no. 71 (March/February 1985), concentrates on the Society's Register, not only as a means to employment but as a celebration and advertisement of the profession as a whole; he also points out the difficulty of costing The Indexer amid changing exchange-rates. Elsewhere in this issue the results of a survey of members' views of The Indexer are published: two thirds placed its value in the upper half of a rating scale; two thirds read or scan all or most articles and features, and feel that the portion of their dues spent on the journal is worthwhile; about a half would be willing to pay for it separately. A new, small newsletter, Indexers and Indexing, is now available at $6 per year from Word Workers. The balance sheet is in the black: as with most of our societies, the bulk of income comes from members' subscriptions, and the bulk of expenditure is on various publications. 'Electronic Shoebox' has a detailed review of the Foxon-Maddocks indexing program as rewritten for the IBM-PC: Linda Fetters summarizes it with the words, 'It may not do anything an indexer could want, but you will get your money's worth'. Three chapters report on their recent activities; I should like to have seen the slide-show entitled 'Rudolph's Elastic Indexing Machine and Other Wonders' in Washington, and to have broadened my mind at Golden Gate's meeting on indexing and industry, which covered artificial intelligence, image indexing, writing with computers . . . 'What's New' has come across a fine gloss on Lenin's virtues. He commented on one Central Committee report: ' . . . that shameless, truly Soviet slovenliness for which one should be put in prison. It has no worth . . . There is no index'. Dr Wellisch approves What every engineer should know about engineering information sources, and quotes at length from an interesting article from the ASIS Bulletin about the need for greater understanding of each other's fields by artificial intelligence workers and information scientists. The first advertisement appears, for a job in databank control with an insurance society: salary $30,000 plus excellent benefits. With notice of the then forthcoming Annual Meeting (Philadelphia, April 1985) comes an enticing piece on the delights and facilities of Philadelphia—everything from an explanation of the street-numbering system to lists of bookstores and eating-places. An excellent idea.

In no. 72, (May/June 1985), the President appeals for volunteers in general and in particular to replace Linda Cooper and Pat Heller, who are resigning as editor and assistant editor of the Newsletter; some of the outlying chapters could also use a strong arm or two. Election results are announced from the Annual Meeting: the new President is Cynthia Weber. The Annual Report is published: membership figures remain constant around 550, with an annual turnover of about 25%, and a year which has seen constitutional change and some self-questioning emerges more clearly from the report as a year of continuing expansion and outward-looking achievement. A review of the second volume of International classification and indexing bibliography deplores a 'proliferation of indexes' including an author index which is itself divided into an index for first authors and one for second and further authors. There is an advertisement for the Foxon-Maddocks program (reviewed in no. 71; see above), and a review of a program for 'occasional indexers', Index Editor, which Ms Fetters feels may be useful to many professional indexers. An updated balance-sheet shows a thinner line between red and black than last time; and the issue closes with a delightful profile of the 'lovable' index which won the H. W. Wilson Award for 1984 (see 'Awards for indexers' in this journal).

We welcome, with no. 73, (September/October 1985), a new editor for the Newsletter in Judith Douville; a lively profile is included in the issue. She is a scientific information consultant whose company is called NdS Information Consultants—thermodynamicists will recognize that the title means 'negative entropy' or 'anti the tendency to disorder'. The President suggests that the pleasurable informality of freelancers' relations with their employers is none the worse for a careful confirmatory letter to follow up the telephone chat, and the cartoonist has devised a garden with rows of vegetables arranged alphabetically. Information Science Abstracts is considering some improvements in its procedures, partly in response to ASI's representatives on its board. 'Electronic Shoebox' reviews the MACREX indexing program. The results of the latest survey of indexer economics make as always interesting reading. 'What's New' does not care for Bibliographies: their aims and
methods, attacking in particular its ‘cavalier’ attitude to
the problems of name indexes; later in this issue Dr
Wellisch develops the theme in a full article on the
arrangement of names in non-Roman scripts; he writes
of the shortcomings of various approaches, and analyses
in particular the ‘solution’ used by Annual bibliography
of the history of the printed book and libraries, which is
to print the name in its original script, but in its ‘Roman’
alphabetical order—with any luck a name so listed can
be incorrectly ordered by any standard including the
conventions of its original language. He recommends
the indexing of non-Roman names twice, once Roman-
ized and once in the original script, on each occasion in
the filing order proper to the script . . . (I don’t think
we’ve solved it yet, somehow). There is now a Standard
(ANSI Z39.47-1985) for computer coded characters:
American National Standard Extended Latin Alphabet
Coded Character Set (ANSEL).

An ambitious project has come to fruition: the index
to ASI Newsletter, nos. 1–60, 1970–83 is now published
($20 for non-members; microform version $32 for non-
members). In addition, for a limited period, a special
package is available of index plus back issues; non-
members are offered a one-year subscription to the
Newsletter ($10), the printed index ($20), and the
microfilmed index and sixty back-issues ($32), all for
$37. A splendid offer for a splendid achievement.

**Australian Society of Indexers**
(Vol. 9, nos. 3, 4)

No. 3 opens most satisfactorily with the announce-
ment that the first Australian Society of Indexers Medal
has been awarded (see ‘Awards for Indexers’). Dietrich
Borchardt’s speech to the 1985 General Meeting is
printed: an authoritative call to indexers to establish
themselves as a ‘profession’; at present indexers are not
‘first generation’ professionals, but those trained to
other callings who come later to indexing. Mr Bor-
chardt supports his Society’s insistence on assessing the
work of practising indexers before ‘admitting them to
the rank of Registered Indexer’, but insists that proper
tertiary-level courses are needed, and that publishers
must be persuaded to use only professional indexers.
Indexers too must ‘divorce themselves from the notion
that a chemical engineer is, by virtue of his ability to
organize the table of chemical elements into a systematic
arrangement, capable of indexing anything else and of
calling himself an indexer to boot’; while the public in
general must be freed from the notion that being clever
enough to operate a computer terminal means being
clever enough to compile an index. Jean Hagger reports
on the SI 1985 Conference; and Kerry Herbstreit
describes the background to the draft editors’ agreement
and work specification published in the previous issue
(see The Indexer 14 (4) Oct. 1985, 265). Sue Harvey
writes of her work on the index to the University of
Melbourne’s 1985 Research Report, which despite every
limitation on the scope of subject entries seems likely to
have 6,000 of these, with another 3,000 name entries.
Ms Harvey comments: ‘An interesting job, and a useful
one. It is not, however, one which someone in her right
mind would choose to do.’ Jean Uhl sees ever-declining
standards of proof-reading and editing, causing horren-
dous difficulties for indexers, and asks: ‘Should we be
charging danger money? . . . Will it be possible in the
future to stick to our noble principles or will we be
forced to lower our standards to conform with the
peculiarities of modern technology?’

In no. 4, we have an article based on the talk given by
John Hirst and Frances O’Neill about the indexing of
the Melbourne Argus between 1859 and 1909; two
indexes, compiled on very different lines, exist for the
earlier and later periods of the paper’s existence, and for
the missing period volunteers summarized news items,
letters, etc., on 5" x 3" cards for co-ordination and
editing by a professional indexer (see The Indexer 14 (2)
Oct. 1984, 117). Tribute is paid to the accuracy and care
of the preliminary work, and the interest and difficulties
of such an index are well explored. Four thesauri were
used: Library of Congress, two specialist Australian
works, and—most vital of all—Common Usage (and
common sense). John Simkin explores references to
indexes in ‘How-to-write-a-book’ books; highly com-
mended is Writing a family history, an Australian
publication which perhaps deserves a wider readership.
Sue Harvey is troubled by the tax position of freelance
indexers: apparently it is felt by some in the Australian
Taxation Office that indexers (like building sub-
contractors but unlike editors) hire out their labour
rather than their intellectual skills, thus changing their
tax position and their status; she asks for members’
views and experiences in this area.

**Indexing and Abstracting Society of Canada**
(Vol. 7, no. 4; vol. 8, no.1)

Most of vol. 7, no 4 is taken up with full and
interesting reports from the Annual General Meeting of
June 1985, which had as its theme ‘The Indexer as
Society of Indexers

(nos. 3/85, 4/85; MicroIndexer 4)

No. 3 announces the publication of the latest annual edition of Indexers available, in a new format; refers gracefully to the pleasant nature of the 1985 Durham Conference (held shortly before publication) while not omitting mention of the competition offered to the speakers from the glorious but fortissimo bells of the neighbouring Cathedral; and notes that members will be asked at the AGM to approve a 25% rise in their subscriptions (£1.50 towards administrative costs and £1 towards increased Indexer costs); the fee charged to those submitting indexes for assessment for the Register will also be raised. More volunteers are needed for the Supervision scheme: a Registered Indexer sends a beginner proofs of a text for which he/she has a completed index; the beginner makes an index to the text, and the RI, for a small fee, assesses, discusses and offers informal advice. One third of members had replied to the wide-ranging questionnaire; there is a new membership secretary and a new editor for MicroIndexer; a revised Standard on alphabetization and filing order (BS 1749:1985) has been published—this is of particular importance as some of its recommendations differ from those in BS 3700 (now under revision) on book-indexing. The first Autumn members’ meeting will be a general discussion; and a Registered Indexer who runs an indexing correspondence course and also a country guest-house offers ‘computing weekends’ at a reasonable charge: the indexer has forty-eight hours of hands-on experience with indexing software while the rest of the family may if necessary dispot itself amid the amenities of the Scottish environs. This must be a departure worth emulating elsewhere. The Newsletter itself has an innovation: a ‘Viewpoint’ feature, designed specially for members’ news and views, which starts off with a plea for the Society’s lists to carry information about a wider range of specialisms, outside the present ‘back-of-the-book’ concentration, and a request from a Middle East specialist for others with similar skills to whom she can refer ‘spare’ commissions.

No. 4 exhorts members to apply for Registration, and summarizes the topics covered at the members’ discussion-meeting; those present agreed that they would endorse a British Standards Institution recommendation that names of indexers should be published. A reminder of SI’s international membership was provided by the news that a member in New Zealand is rewriting An indexing glossary: a guide for computing indexers and indexing word-processors; it would be interesting to
know how widespread in the English-speaking world is the convention that a word-processor operates a word-processor.

*MicroIndexer* 4, under its new editor, Connie Tyler, has twelve A4 sides, sparsely laid out, with a detailed report on the computing workshop at the Durham Conference and on the software demonstrated, and some analysis of the SI questionnaire-responses as they dealt with computer-use: 44 (out of 236) admitted using a computer—some for word-processing only, some making use of a developed program, some working on their own software. There is a review of INDEX-AID, felt to be inexpensive but probably inadequate for serious indexing (it certainly has its own unusual approach to alphabetization). Ann Hall contributes some original ideas for using up your old computer-components; as she points out, 'in these swiftly moving times a computer can be considered senile at the age of four'. Some examples: cut the top off your VDU (which is Very Definitely Useful, of course) remove the innards, and you have a novel aquarium or terrarium; an old disk-drive, also with its innards removed, makes a fine hamster-cage ('No hamster has ever been known to gnaw its way out of one of these'). There is a good review of the WORDET package for the BBC-Acorn micro (known to its many friends as the Beeb) and of its more sophisticated version, WORDWISE PLUS; followed by a review of a book, *Using Wordwise Plus*, which is felt to be of value mainly to enthusiasts. There is a short, but very bitter, cod glossary ('Simple to instal—the installation procedures are likely to invalidate the warranty') and a round-up of micro news and forthcoming meetings and exhibitions. We shall look forward to hearing more of the new inexpensive Amstrad word-processor.

J.L.B.

Copies of newsletters or single items mentioned in this feature may be available on application to the secretary of the society concerned; see addresses given at the end of this journal.

---

**CONFERENCE REPORTS**

*Info '85—Using knowledge to shape the future*

*Info '85* was a combined conference and exhibition organized jointly by Aslib, the Institute of Information Scientists, The Library Association, the Society of Archivists, and Sconul (Standing Conference of National and University Libraries), held at Bournemouth International Conference Centre, 16-19 September 1985. Although the majority of delegates were librarians, there was a substantial minority quite unconnected with the library services—a point that seemed to be overlooked by a number of speakers and, incidentally, by some of the press.

The conference consisted of some 18 papers presented over two and a half days—a very intensive programme which posed problems for those who, like me, were sole exhibitors. In fact the Society of Indexers was lucky enough to be given, at the last moment, a table next to the tea and coffee stand on the balcony overlooking the main exhibition. Although we could not compete with the major exhibitors with their full-sized, well-manned stands, delegates could not pass by our table on their way to refreshments without noticing us!

Exhibitors covered the whole range of books and services from bookbinding through publishing, packaging, marketing and the inevitable computers. The delegates too, numbering around 1,000, were diverse in their professions. Universities and colleges, county councils and numerous computer companies were there in force, but so too were organizations as different as Age Concern, ICI, General Foods, the Ministry of Defence, National Girobank, the BBC and NALGO. There were also many representatives from other countries including Iran, Holland, West Germany and the United States.

As for the conference sessions themselves, these can only be described as bland—interesting, but non-controversial. The only one that brought forth any kind of dissension was the debate on the motion 'This house believes that information technology signals the end of libraries'.

Two speeches were widely reported in the press, and rightly so: that by Viscount Macmillan of Ovenden, and that by Richard Luce, the new Minister for the Arts. Lord Macmillan's first main point was the need for a single comprehensive British bibliography covering all past and present books and periodicals, giving full titles, exact prices, and at least a cross-reference to a current catalogue—not to mention the need also for software indexes. No small undertaking! Secondly, he discussed the problems of copyright. Flexibility was obviously important, and licences might be a possibility. As an example of copyright theft, he quoted a loss figure for his own company of £3m a year, of which 90% was due to overseas pirating.

Richard Luce, in his first major engagement since taking over from Lord Gowrie, reaffirmed the present government's commitment to the arts, but pointed out that although he was committed in principle to a free