Tetralogy completed
The autumn 1965 issue of The Indexer, Volume 4, No. 4, had an unprecedented 48 pages of text, and showed L. M. Harrod well settled into the editorial chair for the completion of his first volume, with index (compiled by M. D. Anderson). His Editorial muses on 'the approaches to book indexing—almost as varied as the books themselves ... Variations in the construction and appearances of indexes are numerous'. He then hands over to his predecessor for five years, John L. Thornton, who writes six pages 'On editing The Indexer', covering contributions, editorial tasks, principles of book reviewing, the volume index, and the journal’s circulation 'to most countries in the world'.

L. C. Johnson writes of 'Archive indexing' ('to make a good index is to create an artificial “memory”'); James Thornton of 'How I indexed Dickens’s letters' ('—Or at least the first volume! There are eleven more to follow'). In nine pages covering 'The indexing of scientific books', J. Edwin Holmstrom distinguishes between alphabetical indexing ('an arbitrary but conventional order') and systematic classification, and between the needs of readers of scientific and of narrative texts:

What makes it necessary for scientists to read books is ... the possibility of finding data, bits of knowledge ... he regards the book as a kind of quarry from which he may be able to extract useful raw material ... this is quite a different motive from the one that animates the reader of a literary work, for instance a biography. He reads ... because he is interested in the theme of the book as a whole.

Holmstrom concludes from this, ‘This difference in outlook and purpose ought to be reflected in differences between the types of indexing proper to “literary” and “scientific” works’.

(Hail to soft/dry indexing!) He suggests, ‘The systematics of the internal indexing within particular books could be directly correlated with the external indexing of all books in the shape of library cataloguing and bibliographical controls’, and ‘calling these two things “microindexing” and “macroindexing”’. The journal's first symposium is presented, with thirteen printers and publishers contributing their views on the placement of page numbers. The index to the Royal United Services Institution Journal, the Social Sciences and Humanities Index, and Short Story Index: Supplement 1959–1963 are described.

Evelyn Green, grand-daughter of Henry Benjamin Wheatley, gives an account of the life and affiliations, with formally gowned photograph, of the formidably academic ‘father of indexing’; L. M. Harrod provides a bibliography of his works—a full page, ‘to be continued’.

The Wheatley Medal for Indexing is awarded for the third time, and, once again, to the creator of the volume indexed: Guy Parsloe, for ‘a series of very full indexes' to the Wardens' accounts of the Worshipful Company of the Founders of the City of London 1497–1681 that he had himself transcribed, calendared and edited for Athlone Press. Norman Knight's index to British Standards Institution's Recommendations for the preparation of indexes for books, periodicals and other publications is one of two others 'singled out for special mention'.

Computers make their first appearance in our pages, in a letter from Robert J. Palmer of New York, 'Electronic indexing', describing the production by computers of technical manuals at IBM, and that company's plans for book indexing. This is to be done by the author 'as the book is written; the computer would take care of the pagination. Nor would there be mistakes in page numbers either by indexer or printer ... So perhaps some day most indexes will be automated'. There are two letters from G. Norman Knight (one reprinted from The Author).

Society news indicates membership of 261; its first sherry party and fourth training course; and articles featuring its work in The Times, Times Literary Supplement and New Yorker.

H.K.B.

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