

advice to family history societies setting up indexing projects, and is currently working on a list of subject headings for genealogical indexing, a standard list of United Kingdom place names, and a manual on indexing for family historians. All these should help greatly in raising standards in this important field.

Ann Hudson, *freelance indexer*

## Publications received and publications noted

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**Alternative literature: a practical guide for librarians.** Chris Atton. Aldershot: Gower, 1996. xi, 202pp. 24cm. Index. ISBN 0-566-07665-9 (cased): £39.50.

**Emblematic variants: literary echoes of Alciati's term *Emblema*: a vocabulary drawn from the title page of emblem books.** Compiled by William S Heckscher and Agnes B Sherman. New

York, NY: AMS Press Inc, 1995. ISBN 0-404-63711-6: \$57.50. William Heckscher has been a member of SI for many years. For earlier works on this subject see *The Indexer* 13 (3) April 1983, 210 and 14 (4) October 1985, 293.

**Great Britain official publications collection guide.** Ottawa: National Library of Canada, 1996. xii, 82pp. 28cm. Index. ISBN 0-660-59875-2 (stapled): \$18.95 (Canada); \$US18.95 (USA and elsewhere). Text in English and French in adjoining columns.

**Natural language engineering.** Edited by Branimir Boguarev, Roberto Garigliano, John Tait. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Published quarterly (four parts form one volume). ISSN 1351-3249. Annual subscription (excluding VAT and sales tax): institutions £79.00 (\$118.00), individuals £39.00 (\$59.00). First issue published 1995.

**Quality management for information and library managers.** Peter Brophy and Kate Coulling. Aldershot: Aslib Gower, 1996. ix, 196pp. 24cm. Illus, bibliog, index. ISBN 0-566-07725-6 (cased): £37.50.

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## THE INDEXER Thirty years ago

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The autumn 1966 issue of *The Indexer*, Volume 5, No. 2, 48 pages, opened in high style with SI's founder-chairman, G Norman Knight, describing in detail his compilation of the Wheatley medal-winning index to the first volume of the ten-volume biography of Winston Churchill prepared by Randolph Churchill. He declared, 'When I was asked to undertake the index to the *Life* of this great statesman, I considered it an exceptional honour and also somewhat of a challenge'. GNK records 'complete co-operation between the indexer and the author', extending to his being 'on three occasions invited to stay at [Randolph Churchill's 18th-century] home ... in its beautifully kept grounds of 23 acres'. Even the proofs were unusually grand and elaborate: 'the author explained that his father had always insisted on *his* proofs being submitted to him in just that form'.

The six-page article considered in detail whether a cumulative index is necessary to a series of separately indexed volumes, and the various problems involved in indexing biographies and histories: treatment of the main character, with the danger of what Knight calls 'over-loading'; provision of glosses such as dates, which may entail much research on the part of the indexer; the optimum length of such indexes, giving some useful examples in the genre; typographical distinction; selection and arrangement of subheadings.

This major article is followed by a shorter consideration by Knight of 'Who pays for the index?'

Robert J. Palmer then provided a six-page account of 'Book indexing in the United States'; understanding by this 'a region bounded by Philadelphia, Buffalo and Boston': 'the majority of books published in the US are published from this area'. There, 'the author is responsible for the index to his book', but may well engage a professional indexer for the work. However, 'Very few persons devote all their time to indexing. The professional indexer may be a copy editor, the copy editor's wife, a not-too-successful author, an expert in a technical field who indexes as a hobby, an actor at liberty, or a housewife'.

Indexes are commissioned by publishing houses, and 'Because of problems of communication and deadlines, editors prefer to work with indexers who live in their immediate geographical area; only a very small amount of indexing is conducted by mail'. Further, 'Almost all contracts in book indexing are verbal ... no written agreement results.' Palmer devotes much space to considering methods of computing payment for indexing, with an hourly rate (plus expenses) preferred overall.

A table shows the fees paid for 28 books divided into four subject categories, with numbers of their indexable pages, total extended lines, and total references, and cost per extended line and per reference for each book. The highest cost per line is 114.6¢, and highest cost per reference

102¢, for *Complex variables* (in the 'Scientific and technical books' category); the lowest per line 6.1¢ and lowest per reference is 5.2¢ for *Public opinion* (in 'Non-scientific textbooks').

Kenneth I. Porter provides eight pages on 'The *World List of Scientific Periodicals*' (three volumes in its fourth edition), which was prepared on punched cards divided into subject fields and sorted by computer. He describes in detail the form of title abbreviations used, and of correct citation.

SI's first President, G V Carey, reported Council's 'reappraisal of our Society's progress and policy, in its seventh year'. Calling his article, 'The Society of Indexers as a servant of the world of letters', he stressed that its first aim expressed in its Constitution was 'To improve the standard of indexing'; only fifth and last came 'To raise the status of indexers'. He cautioned SI members about 'grandiose' notions, and begged, 'If in the theatre of literature we can be thoroughly efficient and helpful door-keepers, dressers, property-men, backstage hands, let's not be too concerned about our names not appearing in lights'.

'The role of the computer in the preparation of indexes for published books' was considered again by Clifford J Maloney in ten pages on 'Practical preparation of internal indexes'. He distinguished between 'indexes which provide clues to other documents', calling these 'external indexes', and 'indexes which provide clues to the contents of the document (or set of documents) in which they appear' — these latter, 'internal indexes', which are closed, limited, individual, specialized, scannable, created at source, self-verifying, synonym-free, inherently word-index, and necessarily word-verified. Each of these characteristics is examined in detail, and the possible advantages of using computers are examined in their light.

News of the Society, the Report of Council for the year, and results of a questionnaire to members, fill four pages. The correspondence column has two letters, both from A R Hewitt: one on citation indexing of English law, the second on 'Improving indexes'. Eleven books are reviewed in five pages.

The Wheatley Medal for 1965 went to Alison Quinn for her index to *The principall navigations voyages and discoveries of the English nation* by Richard Hakluyt, a two-volume facsimile edition of the 1589 original, which is 'one of the more famous works of Elizabethan history and literature'. The index is described as 'constructed on a most ingenious plan, reminiscent of the well-known Chinese box ... combining synthesis within analysis'. A special commendation went to J C Thornton for his 40-page index to *The letters of Charles Dickens* (two volumes).

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