librarian, is probably unfair. At any rate, this little volume illumines, like no other I have ever read, the lonely zeal of the professional indexer.

The seven parts of Hazel’s history of indexing societies (to 1995) that have appeared in The Indexer between 1997 and 2000 are now accessible online on her website: http://aidanbell1.com/html/hkbell, where a sample list of her publications is also available.

Scholarly publications need indexes

Following an article by David Henige in the July 2002 issue of the Journal of Scholarly Publication, ‘Indexing: a user’s perspective’, which suggested that authors should index their own books, indexers on both sides of the Atlantic were quick to rise to the defence of our profession. Nancy Mulvany (who didn’t index her own book – see Table 1 on p. 125 of this issue of The Indexer), was first off the mark with a letter in the October issue of JSP, while the January 2003 issue carried letters on behalf of both SI (Michèle Clarke and Christine Shuttleworth) and ASI (Carol Roberts). [See pp. 164–6 of this issue of The Indexer.]

Recent publications

Blake, Doreen, Clarke, Michèle, McCarthy, Anne and Morrison, June (2002) Indexing the medical sciences, 2nd edn. Sheffield:

Society of Indexers (Occasional Publications No. 3). [see p. 148 for details of how to obtain this.]

Where to go, 2003

14–15 April: Cape Town, South Africa – ASAIB annual conference
19–22 June: Vancouver, Canada – Joint ASI and IASC/SCAD annual conference
27–29 June: Glasgow, Scotland – A Scots Quaire (SI annual conference)
12–13 September: Sydney, Australia – Indexing the World of Information (AusSI international congress)

Contributors to this column

Thank you to contributors Hazel Bell, Jill Halliday, Frances Paterson, Nancy Mulvany and Madely du Preez for all your hard work.

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The Indexer thirty years ago

Hazel K. Bell

The April 1973 issue of The Indexer, Volume 8, No. 3, had 64 pages, with a main theme of international expansion. L. M. Harrod, in his Editorial, wrote of the increasing international circulation of the journal, its being exhibited at overseas conferences, and the increasing number of contributions from overseas.

Another topic considered in this issue was one that remains much discussed today: payment for indexing. Harrod commented:

Whether the cost of compiling indexes should be paid for by the author of the book concerned, or be a publication charge to be met by the publisher, is something that is often discussed when indexers meet together. It is probably a talking point amongst authors too. ... This is a matter which members of the Council of the Society are very concerned with – as they are with actual remuneration.

Little change there in thirty years, then.

Brenda Hall provided a nine-page article on ‘A computer-generated index technique’, its second paragraph beginning:

It may help to understand progress in computer-generated indexing techniques if the usual process in making an index by the manual method is broken down into its components.

A. Text to be indexed
B. Trained indexer
C. Material from A abstracted by B on to cards, making as many separate entries under different headings as are necessary to cover each concept
D. Product of C arranged alphabetically by B
E. Product of D edited by B
F. Product of E typed into copy for printer

After describing the ‘advantages of an articulated subject index’ with ‘the selection of headings and modifying phrases, the manipulation of language and word order ... and the arrangement of common material in a logical system ... all undertaken intuitively by the experienced indexer’, Hall claims: ‘It is only recently that it has been discovered that indexes of this kind have a logical basis which can be expressed in mathematical terms and so be simulated by computer program.’ The remaining eight pages describe ‘a novel computer technique for the production of articulated subject indexes’, used to index the Cartographic Journal. The article concludes:

Successful operation will continue to depend on the exercise of indexing expertise to bring the end product closer to the standard set by the linguistically polished and conceptually accurate
The Indexer thirty years ago

excellence of the best manually produced indexes. The skills of
the indexer should be willingly given in support of further
research.

Michael Green provided a page on 'Indexing technical
books'; Brenda Miller, an Australian member, five pages on
'Indexing children's books', particularly in Australia, pleading in conclusion: 'Children's books need indexes, but
they need good indexes'. Peter A. Thomas wrote eight pages
about 'The use of KWIC to index the proceedings of a Public
Inquiry'. KWIC being the Keyword in Context program
developed in the late 1950s by H. P. Luhn. Luhn 'defined
“Keywords” as “those which characterize a subject more
than others” ... rules have to be established for differenti-
ating between what are significant words and what are non-
significant words in a given piece of text.'

Then follows an article much cited since: Philip Bradley's
'A long fiction index', an account of how he compiled an
index to Walter Scott's 33 Waverley novels. The finished
index contained about 25,000 entries; the work 'occupied
the greater part of the indexer's spare time for nearly three
years'. Entries were typed in duplicate on sheets of paper,
one of these then cut up one and the entries pasted onto
slips. The form of references presented particular difficul-
ties, as so many different editions of these novels, differently
paginated, were published. 'It was decided therefore that
instead of giving page references, chapter numbers and
paragraph identification should be used.' There were
further bibliographical problems as to varying chapter
numbering in some editions, the citation of notes, and
inconsistent spelling, to be solved. (The finished product
brought Bradley an MA degree, and a further happy result –
this article was seen by Eric Moon of the Scarecrow Press of
Metuchen, New Jersey, who published it as An index to the
Waverley novels, in July 1975 – probably the first item from
The Indexer to be reproduced elsewhere.)

Peter Greig wrote eight pages on 'Book indexing in
Canada', outlining its historical development, then
reporting a 'survey on the policies and practices governing
book indexing in Canada' that had been undertaken by the
Bibliographical Society of Canada in 1971. He concluded:
'There is evidence of a growing awareness ... of the need not
only to standardize and coordinate the efforts of those who
have hitherto been responsible for the provision of indexes,
but also to achieve a level of uniformity in the policies and
practices which govern such efforts.'

Greig had lodged in the library of the Society of Indexers
(SI) a set of newsletters of the Index Committee of the
Bibliographical Society of Canada, one of which (Newsletter
no. 3, April 1971) printed the report of the first executive
meeting of the Index Committee, held on 20 March 1971 in
Toronto, where it was resolved that the Committee should
concern itself primarily with the promotion of indexing and
the training of indexers, rather than undertaking major
indexing projects itself. Guidelines for future activities were
agreed upon, including the compilation of a Union List of
Indexes and a Directory of Indexers. An index training
workshop pilot project was being set up in cooperation with
the School of Library Science at the University of Toronto.

The Proceedings of the First Annual All-Day Meeting of
the American Society of Indexers (ASI), attended by 70
members, are summarized. The morning speakers were Ann
McDonald and Theodore C. Hines on training courses. In
the afternoon there was a panel discussion of the topic
'What should indexers expect from publishers? What should
publishers expect from indexers?' One of the three panel-
lists was Dee Atkinson, who provided a three-page paper in
this Indexer under the title 'Indexer-publisher relations: a
two-way street'. This in fact consisted solely of indexers' expectations from publishers (regarding provision of work,
schedules, non-use of author-indexers, specifications, pay,
style and structure, and acknowledgement), with no
concomitant listing of what publishers should expect from
indexers.

'News of the Society' noted that SI's Australian Corre-
spondent, H. Godfrey Green, a freelance indexer in
Victoria, was actively promoting the formation of a Society
of Indexers there, and had enrolled more than 40 personal
and institutional members. A meeting held at his home had
resulted in the formal adoption of a constitution for The
Society of Indexers in Australia.

The membership subscription for SI was raised to £3, and
subscriptions to The Indexer to £2.50 a year. 'Personalia'
included a note that Professor William Heckscher, SI's Hon.
Correspondent for the Netherlands, on a brief visit to the
UK, had lunched with SI Council; as, on another occasion,
had Anne Richter, an ASI Director. The last of the 40
volumes of the 3rd edition of Halsbury's Statutes of England,
the General Index, compiled by A. R. Hewitt, C. C. Banwell
and J. Bray Freeman, had been published, with 1374 pages
in double-column.

'Extracts from reviews' in this issue ran to nine pages, the
last four being 'Extracts from American reviews'.

New British Standards are greeted: on typographic
measurement, changing to the metric system; on book iden-
tification numbers; on loose-leaf publications; and on
presentation of translations.

Again, all (or in this case, both) the book reviews were
written by L.M. Harrod, editor of the journal.

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