SIdelights

NEWSLETTER OF THE

society of indexers
information from A to Z

Editorial

It's in the nature of the Society that a substantial proportion of its members falls within the categories said to be most at risk from COVID-19, whether by virtue of age or of pre-existing health issues or of domestic circumstances. The world learns more about the virus every day; moreover, the virus appears to be metamorphosing daily. At the time of writing, the incidence of undetected infection presents an increasing challenge, especially among those under 40 who previously were thought to be much less at risk than their seniors.

What is clearly inevitable is that the threat that the virus poses will be with us for a long time, perhaps for the whole of the rest of our lives. It will remain out there in the world, global, infectious, mutable, incurable, at best only manageable.

Nor is it the only such virus loose. We who lived at close quarters to the Aids crisis, the height of which lasted from the early 1980s to the late 1990s, share a sinking feeling that all our lives have again become irrevocably blighted. Though the menace of Aids may seem impossibly remote to monogamous and/or celibate, white heterosexuals in developed countries, HIV remains highly active across the globe. Aids-related deaths have exceeded 32 million over 40 years, a figure already topped by 3 million in one year by the number of COVID-19 infections, but the death rate from COVID-19 is well below that of Aids-related illnesses, running at around 1.03 million so far. There are presently almost 38 million known to be living with an HIV positive condition, some of whom will develop full-blown Aids. To those of us who lost numbers of lovers, friends, relatives, comrades, colleagues and acquaintances in the '80s and '90s, HIV remains very real.

Under COVID-19, our arrangements, particularly our social arrangements, will need to be adjusted for the long haul. We cannot expect in the foreseeable future to be able to attend a society conference that looks anything like that which has gone before. Perhaps the most we could imagine would be a gathering – warm, dry weather permitting – in an area with a roof but no walls, a large version of what in southern American states is called a ramada, so that the air circulates around our face-coverings. Whatever we devise will need our collective imagination. If nothing else, a pandemic must inspire fresh thinking.

The Tamar valley –see page 10.

Missed an article in *SIdelights*? Back issues and the cumulative index for 2006–2015 are on the website

**January 20212 *SIdelights*
Copy deadline
Monday 4 January 2021**
(for electronic distribution mid-October)

Presidential Musings

So, still there then? Yes. Me too. Not getting out much these days, to be honest. The pile of books in my study (I'm working from home and some poltroon, possibly me, has let slip my postal address to various publishers' publicity departments) is starting to occlude the window. From where I'm sitting I can see Roy Foster's On Seamus Heaney, the first volume of Maus, a biography of Christiaan Huygens, a run of Mick Herron's early novels, Ben Schott's new Jeeves book, Ysenda Maxtone Graham's book about the history of summer holidays, and two copies each of a biography of J B S Haldane and the *Oxford Book of Theatrical Anecdotes*, edited by Gyles Brandreth. I like Gyles Brandreth as much as the next man (unless the next man is the Duke of Edinburgh) but nobody needs two copies of his book of theatrical anecdotes, or even one, possibly.

Sorry. I'm rambling. I suspect the pile of books across the window is affecting my Vitamin-D levels. Anyway, a jolly thing came up the other day, speaking of books, as we usually are. Our mutual friend and hero Dennis Duncan – historian of the index – has just reviewed for my pages in the *Spectator* Edward Brooke-Hitching's new *The Madman's Library*, a lavishly illustrated omnium-gatherum of eccentric books through history. (This is now my go-to Christmas present).

In his piece, Dennis started to complain that so stuffed was it with oddities it didn't have room to go into the detail. But these days, he said, that didn't matter. You read the taster and then go to Wikipedia for further and better particulars. He said the book should instead be read as "an exercise in Wunderkammer curation – an index of the outlandish". Not an index in a book, then, but a book as an index. What a nice idea.

Perhaps Mr Brooke-Hitching could turn his indexing attentions to my own *ad hoc* library next.

Sam Leith

Society News

Executive Board Report

The Executive Board has met twice recently, on 21 July and 28 September.

New members were approved at both meetings; the increase in new members has continued, with 30 having joined in 2020. There has also been an increase in interest in the training course, following the launch of the 5th edition. Course promotion has been included in the current edition of *The Indexer* and a future issue will have an article on the history of the training course by **Ann Hudson**.

EB discussed methods of con-necting with members during the pandemic at both meetings. Local groups had been holding meetings online, and Ann Hudson had held a Zoom meeting for History indexers, which was oversubscribed. A Zoom account that can be used by

CONGRATULATIONS TO

New Accredited Indexer MSocInd
Bridget Houlton – Banbury

p2 ⮑ SI members will be set up to help local groups run online meetings without a time limit. SI members will be encouraged to use this account to run subject-specialist online meetings, and a short guide to holding online meetings will be provided.

Arrangements for this year's AGM have also been discussed; this will also take place via Zoom at 11:00 on Tuesday 1 December. Guidance for members on the operation of the online meeting will be available nearer the time. Video participation will be optional for members attending, but all present will be able to raise questions, and there are various

Your society needs you. Imminent vacancies on the Executive Board need filling. Please consider helping your profession and your Society by stepping up to devote a very few hours per year to Society business, travel rarely being required. Contact any member of the current Board.

options for managing online voting. The preliminary notice and call for nominations can be downloaded from the Society Business section in the members' area of the SI website:

https://www.indexers.org.uk/society-business/agms/

Tanya Izzard, Minutes Secretary
tanya@tanyaizzard.co.uk

Behind the Chair

Autumn has well and truly arrived. The rain is hammering down on the attic Velux window as it is driven in from the north east. One cat is sleeping on the spare office chair, the other is downstairs on the window ledge after a night out; maybe he's watching the children on their way to school. On the face of it, there doesn't seem to be a lot to look forward to for the rest of the year. Our local fireworks and Christmas lights events have already been cancelled. My son's brass band can only practise in groups of five and they probably won't be playing their seasonal music on the streets this year, although there may be those that say that's a good thing. We can only ring our church bells in groups of four, so we will be making a mournful ding, ding, ding, dong, to ring out the good news on Christmas Day. And the same to empty streets on New Year's Eve, as the pubs will have closed two hours earlier. It has been a long and difficult year, and while we become more accustomed to our straitjacketed lives, we don't have to like it.

But it isn't all gloom. Our clients, the UK publishing industry, continue to adapt to the pandemic situation. The Publishers Association recorded that 2019 was the biggest year for UK publishing ever, and this put publishers in a good position to meet the challenges of the pandemic. Overall,

in 2019 the value of publishing sales was 3.5% higher than in 2018. In consumer publishing, non-fiction and reference, sales rose nearly 6% in value compared to 2018, although sales of academic and professional books fell. I think many of us will have found that most of our individual clients have weathered the last few months and settled into their new working patterns, and our workloads have returned to something like normal.

Looking forward, there may be some individual sectors that will feel the pinch harder than others, for example those related to heritage and museums, where staffing cutbacks are likely and opportunities for blockbuster fundraising exhibitions have had to be put aside. As small businesses, we need to take a look at our own portfolios of clients and see which might be affected by any possible dips over the next year. If you have not yet read it, do take a look at **Dawn Dobbins**' article in the September issue of *The Indexer*, which recounts her personal experience of taking a break and reinvigorating her career, and includes a range of resources and ideas.

I am pleased to see that some local groups have continued to hold their Zoom sessions for get-togethers and discussions. **Ann Hudson** has also led a subject-based group for

historians, and at the time of writing, plans another. If you have any ideas for other subjects or topics that could hold Zoom meetings, do get in touch with **Paul Machen** in the office (admin@indexers.org.uk). EB is in the process of sorting out a Zoom account for the use of the Society, so we will be able to make that available to members for such virtual meetings.

The AGM is almost upon us, and we need more EB members. If you have some time, please do consider standing and contributing to the running of SI. We work in a collegiate fashion and I am very grateful for the work of all the current EB members. Our rules mean that people have to retire from the EB after their terms expire. This is a good thing for SI because new ideas and practices can be introduced. If you have been a member for a little while, please do consider if you could contribute to the running of the Society. We are all volunteers and it does not take up a lot of time on a weekly basis. It probably works best if new people gain experience by sitting in on our Zoom meetings alongside current EB members and gradually taking on duties as they arise. All the EB members are happy to discuss their current roles, so don't be shy.

Nicola King
chair@indexers.org.uk

Website and Social Media

The start of this quarter included the launch of the fifth edition of the training course and so that was the focus of our social media updates. Later in July, we got to promote the new edition of **Hazel K Bell**'s *Indexing Biographies* with the publication of **Paula Clarke Bain**'s review for CIEP. In August, Paula gave us more material to share, with her blog post on a week in the life of an indexer. **Caroline Wilding** celebrated 30 years since qualifying on our training course in September, and this helped us promote the new edition again. We would welcome other members' contributions to promoting indexing. If you have a short article to share on a blog or come across something interesting, do let us know on Twitter by tagging @indexers in your tweet. The most common debate online is whether the author or a professional indexer should create the index.

I've now been involved with the social media accounts for eight years. Back in 2012, Paula started the Twitter account and I volunteered to help on there and Facebook. At a later date, we set up the LinkedIn company page. I believe it is now time for someone new to get involved with running these accounts, with some fresh ideas. We have guidelines in place as to what can be posted by the official Society account, which would be shared by any volunteer who was interested in taking this on. So if you are a keen Tweeter and want to get involved, please get in touch via publicity@indexers.org.uk.

Another reason for my wanting to hand over some of the social media responsibility to another member is that it is holding me back in making progress on some of the bigger projects required on the website. I still need to arrange the survey amongst clients on use of the directory so that we can make decisions on any future changes to the way it operates. We also need to get on with moving relevant material from the Publishing Technology Group website onto our main site. I am already a year behind on making progress on both tasks. Apart from the need to have more information on eBook indexing on our main site, the PTG site has an ongoing cost implication for us in terms of domain names, hosting and management of an additional site.

In terms of day-to-day website management, we improved the online shop by introducing categories, to make it easier to focus on what products are available. The default shop simply listed items alphabetically and was becoming unwieldy. In September, notifications from the forums stopped working after an update, but this has now been fixed and the messaging system here has been made more robust. In addition, we have added plug-ins that allow us to customise the default messages that are sent out via the membership and online shop when purchases are made. This was initially implemented to allow us to state that office responses would only happen during normal UK office hours. We are seeing more purchases from outside the UK and with the general expectation these days that everything is instant online, we needed to clarify our response time.

Ruth Ellis
website@indexers.org.uk

Palgrave, indexing options for

The topic of indexing Palgrave books is discussed periodically on our SIdeline forum. Recently, SI member **Melanie Gee** raised it again, with a post entitled 'Embedded indexing in Palgrave – do they know what to do with it?' This sparked off some interesting comments, and it prompted me to investigate some of my past indexes for Palgrave authors to see how the published versions turned out. I summarised these findings on SIdeline and was also asked to write this article. Taking on a Palgrave index need not be a horror story, but the indexer should be aware of potential traps.

Palgrave offer various options in their 'Advice on indexing' guidelines document which they send to authors. They usually ask for the index to be supplied with the manuscript (although some can still be done on page proofs as a standard back-of-the-book index).

The indexing methods they suggest in the guidelines are:

1 Index prepared from the manuscript (with main headings, subheadings and cross-references), using the manuscript page numbers. (This is their recommended method).

2 Provide a list of key index terms.

3 Highlight terms to be indexed in the manuscript file.

4 Index embedded in the Word manuscript.

With the first three of these options, it is stated that Palgrave's "production partner will then update (or generate) the index with the correct proof page numbers". I hope this is already ringing alarm bells for *SIdelights* readers, but at least their fourth option is one with which many of us are familiar and that we know can produce a good outcome.

The guidelines also tell their authors that "you will be best placed to compile the index for your book as you are the expert in the field and the most familiar with the book's content and the needs of your reader". We all know the counterarguments to that. They do however include a link to the Society of Indexers website (and American Society for Indexing) for authors who wish to commission a professional. The responsibility for hiring and paying for an indexer lies with the author.

As for my experience, I have worked on a number of indexes directly for Palgrave authors, using various methods to produce the indexes. Previously I had only

p4 ➲ seen the published outcome to one of these indexes via an Amazon 'look inside' preview. The other Palgrave books had no such preview and they are often expensive to purchase, as can be the case with academic titles.

Melanie had started the SIdeline thread by asking whether anyone had actually seen how an embedded index for Palgrave looked when published. A few of us replied to say that generally we hadn't. This discussion coincided with a Palgrave sale on many of their hardbacks, including several that I had indexed, so I thought I would get hold of a few copies to check on their printed indexes. I was able to take a look at four of my past Palgrave indexes in published form.

Index A, 2017 (C19 literary studies/utopianism)

Method: Index prepared from Word manuscript, using manuscript page numbers, using SKY Index.
Outcome: This is the only index I did using Palgrave's recommended method of preparing a non-embedded index using the manuscript page numbers. In the published version, headings, cross-references and italic text all look fine. However, the page numbers were updated by the production partner with varying success. It seems largely OK, but with some places where they had still clearly just searched for everything under that term, which created some strings that weren't in my sent copy. In one case, a subentry goes from 2 to 19 locators. This is a particular problem with subentries, as there seems little or no understanding that the subentry locators are only in the context of its main entry, so you can end up with lots of extra unwanted locators. A problematic outcome, then.

Index B, 2018 (C20 literary studies/poetry)

Method: Standard back-of-the-book index from page proofs PDF, using SKY Index.
Outcome: This book was already at page proofs stage, so I created a standard index. The final index was printed as per my supplied index copy. All headings, cross-references, italics, page numbers and page ranges were fine, plus I received a nice indexer credit in the acknowledgements (another bonus of working direct for authors – they know who you are to thank). Perfectly happy with this one.

Index C, 2019 (social sciences/digital activism)

Method: Embedded index on Word manuscript, using SKY Index + WordEmbed.
Outcome: Having more embedded indexing experience, I did this one using the WordEmbed add-on program with SKY Index. In the printed index, page numbers and page ranges had updated correctly to final page proof numbers. Cross-references, italics and most headings were fine. However, there were some strange text problems where spaces had disappeared/moved in several headings, leading to things like '*Telegraph*newspaper', 'TVshow' and one main heading of 'Socia lmedia'. This is not how I supplied it, and neither was it picked up by anyone's checks later. An odd and annoying result.

Index D, 2020 (social sciences/politics)

Method: Embedded index on Word manuscript, using Index-Manager.
Outcome: By now, I had moved to creating embedded indexes using the Index-Manager standalone program. Headings, subheadings, cross-references, italics, and special characters (many Scandinavian names in this one) were all fine. The page numbers, note numbers and page ranges had all updated correctly to the final page proof numbers. I found no problems here.

So, from my perspective, indexes B and D both turned out fine, but A and C both had issues. All of these indexes were from different years, authors, indexing methods, and possibly typesetters/production partners, so it's difficult to make sweeping conclusions. Personally, though, for future Palgrave books, I'm happy to continue producing embedded indexes on the Word manuscript using Index-Manager, or as standard back-of-the-book indexes at proofs stage.

Another note is that some of us have been asked to produce an embedded index on Palgrave books where the chapters had to stay as separate Word documents for indexing but with one combined index list. This can be done (again in Index-Manager in my case) but with certain provisos. Those books have not been published yet, so perhaps we can report back on their indexes in future.

A further recent development (as *SIdelights* went to press) is hearing of indexers being asked to supply a word list and then use the online 'Palgrave Portal' software to check/amend the packager's embedding of terms. I have only read about this on the scholarlyindexing@groups.io list, perhaps just affecting US/Canadian indexers, but wise to be aware. The description of trying to work with this system sounds worse to me than other Palgrave methods, and I would not touch it with a bargepole.

One final plus point to end on is that I have charged at least SI recommended rates for every index done for Palgrave authors. What's more, I find that individual authors often pay much faster than when one is waiting for a publisher's standard terms of payment. Sometimes an author will pay on the same day as they receive the invoice – I'm happy to confirm that this is not just an indexer's myth.

In conclusion, I would say that there is good and bad to consider when taking on an index for a Palgrave book, but it can work out well. If the indexer is aware of the issues, understands their options, asks about the indexing method required, and is ready to advise the author and publisher, we can still get the outcome we all want, which is giving the book the best index possible.

Paula Clarke Bain
pcbain@baindex.org

The Swedish Death Clean

It started when my daughter cheerfully informed me that when I had "gone" everything was bound for the skip (or skips). Let us pass over the attic, from which packing cases of blankets, sheets (some unopened wedding presents from the sixties), went off to Age UK. Know anyone who wants six used duvets?

There were twelve archive boxes of documents in my garage. Never having thought of myself as a hoarder, more as just careful, a "better keep that in case" type, it was quite an eye-opener. All bank statements and cheque stubs since the late sixties. All indexing correspondence, invoices, remittance documents, tax documentation and all receipts from starting freelance work.

I looked through my first invoice book and wallowed in nostalgia. I recently sent out invoice number 4217. I had in front of me invoice number 1. Someone more commercially minded would have started with invoice 153 so as not to appear a beginner. However, back to invoice number 1, date 4 January 1984, to the Crowood Press (a small private venture in the next village specialising in country pursuits) for work done on *Reservoir Trout Fishing*, six hours @£4 plus £1 for collection and delivery. This was closely followed by invoice 2 Rod Building, ten hours @ £4 plus £1 collection and delivery. I remember both well.

Invoice number 7 was my first to a national publisher, The Macmillan Press, *The Literature of Scotland* by R Watson. I was terrified and stood long at the post box with envelope in hand. Dare I post it? Was there anything further I could do to make it better? I gave the envelope a good luck kiss before sending it on its way.

It wasn't until invoice number 10, of 17 September 1984, that I did my first law index, for Financial Training Publications. They later became Blackstone Press, and then part of OUP. I still work on reissues of publications started at Financial Training. *Mason & French on Company Law*, still going strong today, started at Financial Training, was the book I indexed for Registration. Oh happy times, when the commissioner, author, editor, proofreader, indexer and typesetter all knew each other and were all valued parts of 'the team'.

In the next couple of years, there was a wide variety of subjects, notably *Superforce* by Paul Davies, then a lowly lecturer, later a professor of astrophysics, I understood most/some of it. There was a series of four or five books on palmistry, astrology, divination, tree hugging and tarot which made unusual Christmas presents. *Nimeiri and the Revolution of Das-May* had to be done at breakneck speed as his death was expected daily. *How to Get a Hit Record* was an interesting diversion. A most useful book on medical examinations taught me what clothing had to be removed for which procedure.

Invoice 44, St Mark's Hospital for the King's Fund, had the most gory photographs of Victorian surgical instruments. No such thing as data protection then, they happily noted that Charles Dickens suffered from piles.

Now you all know. They changed the pagination in the middle of my final edit, and I was faced with re-sorting the couple of thousand index cards from alphabetical to page number order, changing the numbers, sorting back to alphabetical and then typing. I bit the bullet, bought my first computer and Macrex. What a great decision, never regretted.

In late 1985, a series of books from the University of Baghdad arrived, which I hated. I think they were doctoral theses needing indexes for sale in the US. Devotion to my professional reputation led me to study for, and pass, the Cambridge University certificate in Arabic and Arab Studies. I could order a meal, book a hotel room, follow instruction on how to find the local *madrassa* and recite the call to prayer, but most importantly learned why Arabic names can be spelt in so many different ways.

Invoice 90 of 14 May 1986 was my first real nightmare, and remains one of the worst. *Yezidis* was the life's work of John Guest. He seemed to think that almost every other word of the text should go into the index. The Yezidis, I learned, were an autonomous group living in the mountainous boundaries of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Russia and Syria, neither Muslim nor Christian and having their own religion, every aspect of which was needed in the index. I had never heard of them at the time. Now ➲
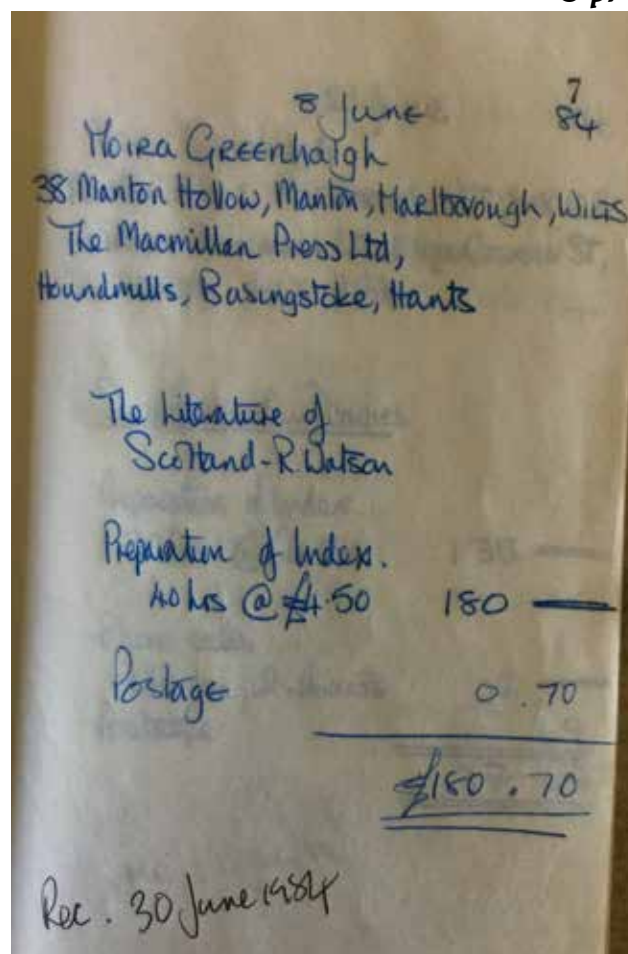
Invoice number 7

they make headlines by being massacred by all sides in every middle eastern conflict. Book still available from Amazon price £127.

There were a number of most enjoyable books from Blandford Press in Poole. I covered *Healthy Eating on a Budget*, *Britain – a View from Westminster*, *Budgies*, *Blues – the British Connection*, *Celtic Warriors*, *Costume and Fashion 1550–1920*, *Flora and Fauna of Kuwait*, *The Gurkhas*, and *Indoor Bonsai*. Such a lovely variety of subjects, never to be repeated as by the end of my first invoice book the law books were coming thick and fast. I decided to specialise.

I really enjoyed browsing through invoices 1–100, but the main aim was to clear out my archive as business records only have to be kept for six years, or seven years for the VAT registered. I didn't need to keep the receipts for every purchase I had claimed as a business expense, or every cheque stub and bank statement, but they shone a torch into a bygone age. Who buys typewriter ribbon nowadays, or uses the local office services to make photocopies? Who waits in all day for couriers to deliver or collect just to save a day or two in the post? Who now gets through dozens of paying-in books for remittance by cheque?

But enough with the nostalgia. I had embarked on a Swedish Death Clean ... look it up. The old documentation has been reduced to four archive boxes which await collection by a secure shredding service, and a lot of ashes in the garden incinerator. There is a heap of empty box files to go to the local free-cycle group, and a box of over 200 3.5in disks, loads of rusty paperclips and stiff elastic bands in the bin. It feels good.

Moira Greenhalgh
moira@m-greenhalgh.co.uk

ABOVE: Moira's Empty box files
BELOW: Now-unreadable 3½in. discs

My Past Life

Jo Penning on a varied journey through healthcare

I have always been a keen reader. I remember, as a teenager, being absorbed in Lucy Ellmann's wonderful novel *Sweet Desserts* with its mischievous index. Many years later, when I took up keeping a few back-garden chickens, I bought a colourful textbook on the subject; but it had a woeful index, which I felt lessened its value. Studying for a speech therapy degree at Leeds in the 1980s, I consulted indexes regularly but rarely thought of the art of indexing itself.

As well as being a bookworm, I had had a wealth of experience in my distant youth of babysitting, and the apparent certainty of a vocational course in healthcare, working largely with children, beckoned. Many of my family were teachers, and I felt drawn to a career that was related but not actually at the chalkface.

Thus, as a rather introverted but hopeful eighteen-year old, I took up a place at Leeds Polytechnic (as it was in the 1980s) to study speech therapy. I recall a lecturer in anatomy and physiology remarking that, though the course did not demand vast intellectual ability, it did require a great deal of intellectual stamina; we tackled subjects such as language pathology, psychology, linguistics, phonetics, education, and much more, as well as clinical placements every week throughout the three years.

Having grown up in villages, I was excited to be in bustling Leeds. Yorkshire felt quite foreign to me; my only other experience of it was vicariously through reading all the James Herriot books as a teenager. On one placement at a rural school, I noticed with concern a little boy's hands which were marked with red welts and asked him what had caused it. "It were me ferrets", he replied.

My finals coincided with family turbulence back home which was not a happy combination. But I achieved my degree and after some job-searching took on a community speech therapist post in West Lambeth, London, and moved eventually into a subsidised rental flat in

Balham with a couple of other young women health professionals.

In my new job, I spent several days at a school for children with moderate learning difficulties. I soon learned from the previous incumbent that it was awash with politics. There was one teacher who clearly resented that I took 'her' children out of the classroom regularly to work with them. Other teachers were more welcoming and constructive, thankfully.

Better times generally were had at my Clapham clinic with its friendly group of therapists, and the health visitors, with whom I had to liaise, were a down-to-earth bunch.

I also jointly ran a stroke group at a geriatric day unit. Heather and I became very fond of the regulars. Games involving singing were often popular and, though people with damage to the left side of the brain (the language part) were often limited in their speech and understanding of language, they could be fluent singers (a right-hemisphere skill). We had to discharge people occasionally to allow newcomers in. The plan was that a follow-on group would be set up, but unfortunately budgets were tight and then my line-manager left to have a baby. Sadly, in my second year there, the geriatric day unit was closed, and the group too ended.

I was having some serious doubts as to whether speech therapy was for me; I decided to return to studying and chose teaching. I got a place at Goldsmiths, University of London, to do a Postgraduate Certificate in Education, and enjoyed the course – learning about infant education. But by the end of the year I was still worried about my management of a class of thirty-plus little ones; you truly do have to have eyes in the back of your head in teaching. Although I received a good final report, I decided not to pursue this career further.

My landlady at that time had decided to sell up her house, so I moved back in with my mother in Hertfordshire. I did some voluntary work, a play scheme in the school holidays, and had some psychotherapy to help with anxiety. My enthusiasm returned and I applied for and was offered a new speech therapy post in West Norfolk.

It was a peripatetic post, based at two clinics in King's Lynn and Wisbech and visiting many rural mainstream schools. I was lucky enough to have an NHS car, so I could visit places like Burnham Market and Holt near the windswept North Norfolk coast. There were some interesting characters on my books: one young boy on the autistic spectrum made me smile when we were looking at some food pictures. We came to an image of a carrot; there was a long pause and then, "underground orange".

After well over a year in Norfolk, issues with morale and changes in personal circumstances led me to hand in my notice. I decided to head back to London and move in with my partner in Ilford, and I took up a job as support worker for people with learning disabilities in Stratford East.

The people we supported at the Stratford East project had recently moved out of South Ockendon Hospital in Essex which had closed. The new philosophy encompassed "care in the community", "the dignity of risk", and it seemed like a worthwhile endeavour to 'empower' these characters who had had limited opportunities in institutional care. Seven older women with a range of disabilities were supported in their daily lives by a team of workers. The two managers were inspiring

p8 ⮌ characters and there was good staff support. It was demanding, mostly practical work providing personal care, giving medication and doing domestic and administrative tasks. After a while, I became key worker to Iris, who was a colourful, sometimes challenging char-

Jo's watercolour of Peter fishing in Wales.

acter. There was less micro-management then and I was free to book outings in consultation with Iris – eating out, theatre visits etc; often Iris' beloved sister Bess came along too. I accompanied the ladies with other workers on two seaside summer holidays.

Eventually my itchy feet returned and I started looking again at speech and language therapy posts. A community clinic job came up in Tower Hamlets, and I applied and got it. It was a part of London I didn't know very well and one of contrasts: the wealth of the City sat cheek by jowl with poverty in Whitechapel, Limehouse and Bow.

Many of the children referred to the speech therapy service were Bangladeshi and spoke Sylheti as their first language. We had a Sylheti-speaking support worker called Afroza. At the start of an assessment session, we would settle the child with a toy and then I would start taking a case history with Afroza interpreting. This was supposed to include relevant birth details but, as the husband usually did all the speaking (for cultural reasons), it was often tricky to ascertain a true picture.

I recall a little Iranian girl of about three years old where the health visitor's referral stated that she could not even respond to her name. With the help of the Farsi interpreter, I discovered that this little girl had been given an English name on her recent arrival in the UK, which explained her non-compliance. Once she settled in a local children's centre, she made great progress with her communication skills.

After a couple of years or so, we were excited to find I was expecting a baby, and Jon and I decided we would move out of London, closer to some of my family. We moved to Welwyn Garden City. By this time, I was working as a locum speech therapist in Enfield. I said my goodbyes to the Enfield team, with thoughts of possibly returning in the future, and began painting the spare bedroom in our new home.

Over seven years of being a full-time mum followed. Jon's job often involved him working away from home.

I took up bread making, watercolour painting, and volunteering with the National Childbirth Trust, Oxfam and the Real Nappy Network, as well as, of course, running after my lively toddler.

Nearly three years later, we suffered the catastrophe of neonatal death: our second baby, Thomas, was born just a couple of weeks over full term but died the day after his birth, never having breathed independently. It was a crushing experience. But I had a nearly three year-old son Peter to keep me focused much of the time. Thankfully, family and friends rallied to help us through. SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society) had monthly meetings which were a really helpful support for me. I went on to train to be a bereavement counsellor through SANDS. It seems a long time ago now but you never forget.

Twenty months later, we had another son, Philip, and when he was two we moved up to Shrewsbury. I went back to some part-time work as a support worker for people with learning disabilities. I got to know a couple of service-users particularly well, and generally made a contribution of value.

Our younger son was settled at junior school and one of his best friends had a mum who was an indexer. I would ask her from time to time what book she was working on, and thought it sounded intriguing.

My father and his new wife Celia came to stay with us one day. Helen, the indexer, had called by and I mentioned Helen's profession; Celia said "Could you do work like that, Jo?"

This got me thinking and eventually I took up the idea with Helen. She was a useful resource and encouraged me to persevere throughout the interesting and well-structured course.

I have been enjoying indexing for over five years now, and in the last couple of years completed my training as a proofreader with the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading and the Publishing Training Centre.

Phil and hens.

My Neck of the Woods

Sue Goodman lives in Gunnislake in the Tamar Valley

When people think of Cornwall, they usually think of beautiful beaches, surfing and picturesque fishing towns, but I live in South East Cornwall, the part many holiday-makers drive past. The River Tamar separates Devon and Cornwall and runs almost the entire border. Rising close to the north coast, it flows south in a winding course, eventually ending up in Plymouth Sound. The valley is rural and dotted with hamlets, small villages and towns, the nearest towns of any size being Plymouth, Liskeard and Launceston.

I had lived in the area previously, but always promised myself that I would return if possible. I enjoy the space, pace and attitude to life as well as the stunning scenery. I'm not Cornish and I don't speak it. As a breed they can be stubborn and don't tolerate incomers easily. However, I have found they have mellowed since I first lived here all those years ago. Nestled along the bank of the Tamar, I can enjoy tranquil riverside walks, through forested trails, or really get away from it all on the moors, as we are equidistant from Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor with their balancing stones, windswept tors and ancient archaeology. It has been designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – AONB or affectionately known as ANOB by locals.

The local economy is very limited. The mining all stopped a hundred years ago and we are too far from the coast for fishing, so it really relies on tourism and hospitality. Unemployment is relatively high and we usually figure high up on the deprivation scale. Many younger people find that there's not much for them here and many move away, sometimes returning later.

The Tamar valley is known for its daffodils and although they are not grown here now in the same numbers, it is still possible to see many reminders of this past industry. Small tumbledown sheds dot many of the fields; known as daffodil sheds, they were used to pack the flowers before being sent to markets, including London. A walk around the lanes in spring time is a joy, and I never realised that there were so many varieties. Many of the flowers grow wild in fields and along the banks of our Cornish hedges and seem as if they are a pure herald of spring. The area still has market gardening as one of its industries, and is well known for strawberries. These are some of the sweetest I've eaten – they seem to have a distinctive quality to their flavour. They are lovely with scones and clotted cream, cream on top of course. There's also a lot of farming around here, both animal and cereal.

Like much of Cornwall, the area has a distant history of mining, going back to the Bronze Age. Tin, silver, copper and arsenic have all been extracted at various times. Devon Great Consols mine had the dubious accolade of producing enough arsenic in one year to wipe out the population of the world (at that time). The spoil tip from it can still be seen today – it's a desolate, rust-coloured mountain, on which nothing grows, despite the last activities being so long ago.

Our little town has a very old bridge; it is one of the oldest crossings of the River Tamar. Called New Bridge, it was built about five hundred years ago (nobody's sure exactly when) and this year the local community had planned many events to mark its prestigious anniversary. Sadly, due to the pandemic, these have had to be postponed, but it is hoped that they will all take place next year and we'll enjoy them all the more. The bridge itself is something of a sore topic locally. It is the default crossing for the main route from South Devon into Cornwall. If the main crossing (Tamar Bridge on the A38) is closed, then all the traffic has to come through Gunnislake with its single width road restriction and traffic lights. We have had incidents when our bridge has been closed for several weeks because someone has driven into it, then residents have to take a twenty-seven mile diversion. On the plus side, this makes the town very quiet.

Communications are not good, we have only two significant roads and a network of smaller roads. Some are so narrow that grass grows up the middle. It can mean that getting from one place to another takes a surprising amount of time and you must not rely on your satnav. Public transport is very limited, we have a bus route which runs East-West, connecting with the towns of Tavistock (in Devon) and Callington, but if you want to go to Plymouth the best way

Gunnislake's New Bridge

is via the small rail branch line which winds its way slowly along the river for the first half of its journey. There are a couple of stations and it has to stop at the level crossings and sound its horn before proceeding. At one point it crosses the River Tamar on the Calstock viaduct and the view is stunning. Not surprisingly, this has earned it a ranking as one of the most picturesque train journeys in the region.

The area has always attracted creative and artistic people. J. M. W. Turner toured most of Cornwall, but Gunnislake bridge and its surrounding area feature in his painting 'Crossing the Brook'. Today, the area is still popular with artists and creative folk, many of whom live and work here.

In 2016, we saw the Man Engine drive through our town at the start of its tour of Cornwall to celebrate Cornwall's tenth anniversary of gaining mining World heritage status. It is the largest puppet in Britain and was inspired by the mechanisms used to transport miners in the old mines. When fully standing, it was eleven metres tall, so tall that it couldn't stand upright for us because of the overhead power cables. We had to content ourselves with his being folded up, but he was allowed to raise his head, blinking his eyes and spout steam for us. He was transported on a low-loader for his tour but was

Arrival of the Man Engine.

impressive nevertheless.

To coincide with this, our local AmDram group put on their first non-panto production. Its theme was an historic mining disaster and, as director, I decided to include a song written about it, the only song in which I've ever heard mention of Gunnislake. It was well received by the community and a complete sell-out.

see also . . .

If you were engaged in a conversation about cinema and you referred to someone whose name sounded like Nero, your interlocutor might well be puzzled. Is this one of the 17 extant movies or 11 television episodes entitled *Nero*, or one of the many and various characters called Nero in fiction, animation, comic books or video games, or indeed the live-action role-playing game of that name? However, if you preceded the name with 'De', all humanity would know exactly who you meant. What's more, all humanity would agree that his name is always rendered De Niro and never de Niro.

This looks like an unarguable indexing case. The only correct version must be:

De Niro, Robert

Nobody needs to bother with cross-referencing from

Niro, Robert De

(and certainly not Niro, Robert de) because no one would look for him under N.

Wernher von Braun

Would that all such names were so straightforward. What is technically known as the nobiliary particle causes great uncertainty and quite a bit of dispute among indexers. Should a 'von' or a 'la' constitute the filing element? Is it always necessary to cross-refer, especially to a version that is evidently not in use? Should the prefix be capitalised if it is the filing element, even when it ordinarily appears in lower case? And is it acceptable to wink at the particle in the sort, even if it is the filing element?

Some surnames have happily solved the problem for us by segueing the prefix into the body of the surname, thus: Leonardo DiCaprio, Cecil B and Agnes DeMille, Eugène Delacroix, Debrett's and so on. Making life easy, they are always welcome in our texts.

Elsewhere, all is in (potential) dispute. The SI training course decrees that nobiliary particled names "must be entered in accordance with the practice of the country to which the bearer of such a name belongs, unless, of course, the bearer's own usage has differed from the common practice", and there follows a survey of practice in five European countries. This is useful but perhaps over-scrupulous. An index being compiled for sale in a foreign country will certainly entail a number of domestic conventions in which the indexer will need to be immersed. For most projects, however, the expectations of a home readership will surely take precedence.

For instance, we are advised that German prefixes should follow the forename (and hence reside at the end of the entry). Wernher von Braun may have been born in Germany and spent his first 33 years

The Story of the Trapp Family Singers

Maria Augusta Trapp

p11 ⮎ there, but his subsequent career and fame proceeded in the United States and he has been known to the world as von Braun rather than Braun. It would surely be a futile exercise to file him under B.

Georg von Trapp and his children present greater complexity. No doubt their widest fame derives from the movie of the Rodgers & Hammerstein stage musical *The Sound of Music* wherein the family is consistently referred to as von Trapp. But Maria's American-published memoir on which the show is based is entitled *The Story of the Trapp Family Singers* and credited to Maria Augusta Trapp. There can be no recourse but to index family members under both Trapp, von and von Trapp, taking whichever is suitable to the context as the primary entry.

Names with von don't necessarily cause most difficulty. In his definitive *Macmillan International Film Encyclopedia*, Ephraim Katz lists all vons under their last names, cross-referencing to them from a list of vons under V. He lists Hollywood names led by de under D, capitalising the D (though not that of Olivia de Havilland or Louis de Rochement), but making exceptions for French-born individuals, such as
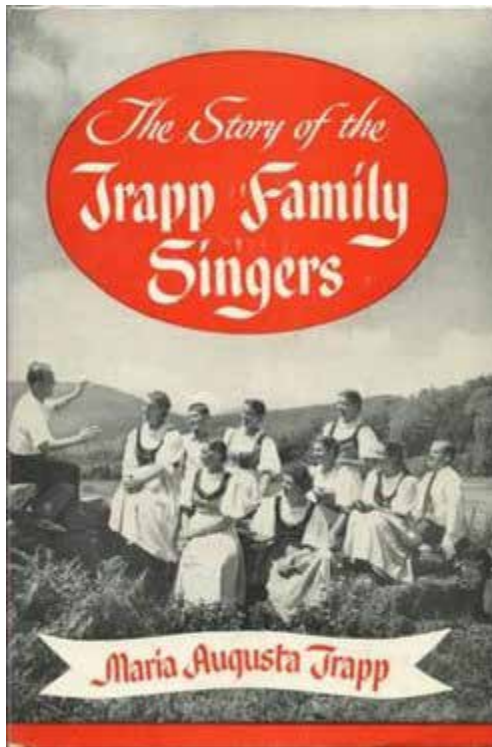
de Funès, Louis. See FUNÈS, Louis de

Perhaps he once did the SI course.

Just as De Niro is always correctly recorded with a capital D, so John le Carré always appears with a lower case l, save when the whole of his name is capitalised. As no one refers to him as Carré, it seems perverse to think of indexing him as a C and impertinent to capitalise the l just because it begins the entry.

The training course, following French practice, advocates a distinction (because of the etymology) between de and d' on the one hand and le or la on the other. The former should be transposed to the end of the heading. But it's hard to imagine that

Gaulle, Charles de

would be a logical entry, and indeed in Julian Jackson's biography

WINNER OF THE DUFF COOPER PRIZE

DE GAULLE

"A triumph, and hugely readable."
—Max Hastings, *Sunday Times*

JULIAN JACKSON
AUTHOR OF *The Fall of France*

he is entered as

de Gaulle, Charles

and isn't that what we would all look for in the index?

The long and varied history of disseminated names tends to suggest that no rule covers every instance. If celebrities like Oscar de la Renta and Vincent d'Indy, Giuseppe Di Stefano and Vincent Van Gogh never shed their prefixes in spoken reference, why would they do so in an index? And then along comes Beethoven who is never going to be entered anywhere under V for van.

Cyril Connolly's masterpiece *Enemies of Promise* demonstrates how various the handling of names in indexes can be. The edition I have is the fourth and last, published by André Deutsch in 1988, but presumably the index survives as compiled for the first (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1938). One suspects that Connolly made his own index, for it suggests an exercise conceived solely for his literary peers. Thus the F section is as follows:

Farlow, 204, 219, 220–21, 222, 226, 269
Firbank, 45–50, 53
Flaubert, 41, 54, 241
Forster, 18, 38–9, 61, 93, 104, 131
Fidelity, 53–4, 221–2, 238
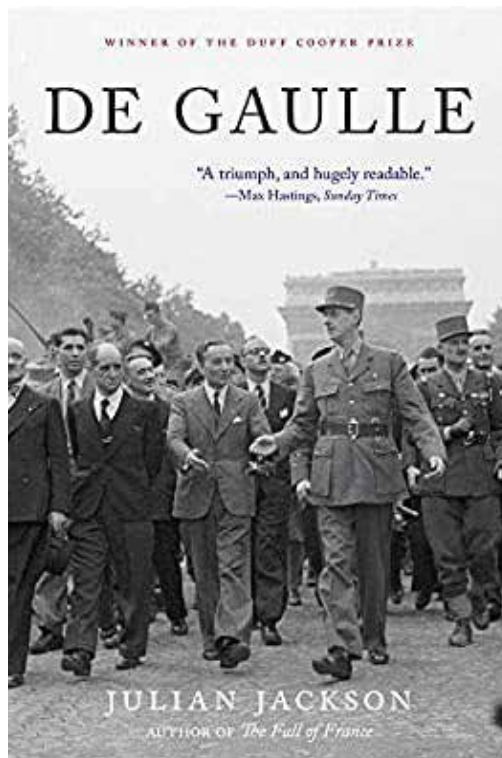
The lack of forenames evidently assumes that the readership will instantly recognise the surnames, which obtains for all but Farlow – he is Connolly's Eton College contemporary Denis King-Farlow, whose legend has not endured beyond Pop. Fidelity refers not to a student society at Eton or Oxford but to one of a small handful of common nouns listed, all capitalised. This is an index that appropriately conveys the cavalier dandyism of its author's style, but I doubt that Connolly would have garnered the Wheatley Medal.

The Locator

See also cross-references in Word via Index-Manager

It is a truth universally acknowledged (among embedded indexers, at any rate) that creating cross-references in Word is a challenge. For *see also* cross-references in particular, some sort of 'fudge' is always required. When using Index-Manager, these same limitations still lurk in the background. Although Index-Manager has a Cross-references Window, in which cross-references can be created, in practice a different approach is often needed.

A typical requirement in indexing is for a *see also* cross-reference, combining multiple alternatives, positioned at the end of any subheadings. For example:

> fruit
>> buying 2, 4–6
>> growing 10–12, 14, 16
>> health benefits 2, 6–8, 16, 20
>> recipes 25–30
>> *see also* apples; oranges;
>>> watermelons

If you create the *see also* cross-references in Index-Manager using the Cross-references Window, the end result in Word will be:

> fruit *see also* apples, *see also* oranges, *see also*
>> watermelons
>> buying 2, 4–6
>> growing 10–12, 14, 16
>> health benefits 2, 6–8, 16, 20
>> recipes 25–30

which is not what we want at all. The cross-references are in the wrong place and we have unwanted repetition of '*see also*'.

The answer is to create the cross-references not as cross-references, but as a subheading, and force the sorting order so that it comes last in the list. In other words, the aim is to create an XE entry something like this:

> {XE "fruit:see also apples\; oranges\; watermelons;zzzz" \t}

(Note the first two semi-colons are preceded by a backslash because we want the semi-colon read literally. The third semi-colon functions to introduce the sort code, and the zzzz sorts the subheading at the end of the alphabet. The \t switch at the end suppresses the inclusion of any page number).

Achieving this in Index-Manager is not entirely straightforward, because there is no way to directly include the \t switch in an index entry. This means

there is always some editing to do in the Word document after exporting – and potentially every time you go back and forth between Index-Manager and Word. The trick is to keep the need for editing to a minimum.

Here is one way to proceed. It's important (for reasons which I will explain later) that you are able to use smart quotes (") as opposed to straight quotes (") when required. You can set Word up to use smart quotes by default (File > Options > Proofing > Autocorrect Options > AutoFormat as You Type and make sure the box for 'Replace straight quotes with smart quotes' is checked (Fig. 1). Click OK.) Alternatively, you can type
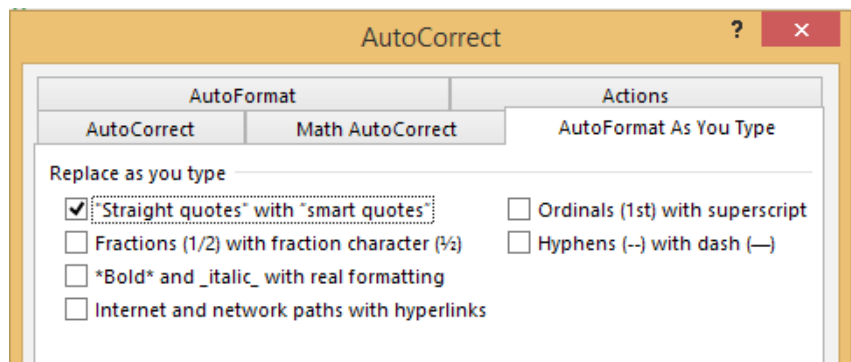

Fig. 1. Auto-Format set up for smart quotes.

a closing smart double quote using Alt + 0148 on the number pad.

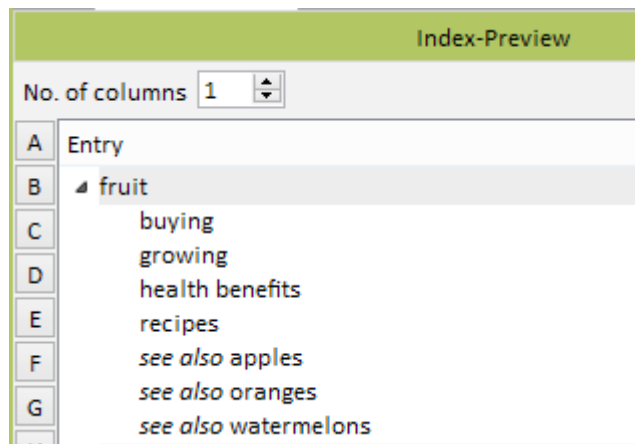1 In Index-Manager, create cross-reference subheadings as you go along (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2. Step 1, create separate subheadings.

2 When you are ready, edit one of the subheadings to combine the multiple cross-references (together with the sort code), and delete the superfluous ones (Fig. 3).

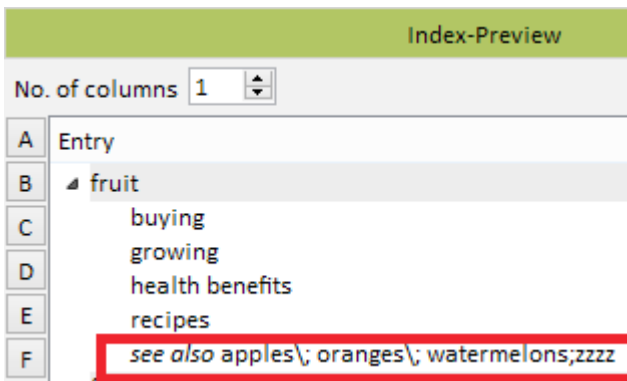3 Export the index and close Index-Manager. Open the Word file.

Fig. 3. Step 2, combine into one subheading.

4　Navigate to the index and update the index. At this point our entry will look like this:

> fruit
> 　buying 2, 4–6
> 　growing 10–12, 14, 16
> 　health benefits 2, 6–8, 16, 20
> 　recipes 25–30
> 　*see also* apples; oranges; watermelons 52

Note the presence of a page number after the cross-references. This is because we don't yet have a \t switch in the XE field. The next step will add this.

5　With hidden text showing, use Ctrl + H to open the Replace dialogue, and do the following Find and Replace:

> Find:　zzzz"
> Replace with:　zzzz"\t

It's important that the double quote mark in the 'Replace' box is a smart quote. (If you have set Word up as explained above, you simply type your quote marks in the normal way in both the 'Find' and 'Replace' boxes. If not, use Alt + 0148 in the 'Replace' box only.)

Click 'Replace All'

6　Hide the hidden text and refresh the index. We now have the entry we want:

> fruit
> 　buying 2, 4–6
> 　growing 10–12, 14, 16
> 　health benefits 2, 6–8, 16, 20
> 　recipes 25–30
> 　*see also* apples; oranges; watermelons

and the underlying XE field for the last subheading looks like this:

> {XE "fruit:see also apples\; oranges\; watermelons;zzzz"\t}

What happens if we have to re-open the file in Index-Manager? This is where the smart quotes become important. Assuming you have smart quotes before the \t switch, Index-Manager will read the XE entry as a subheading, and in the Index Preview the entry is as
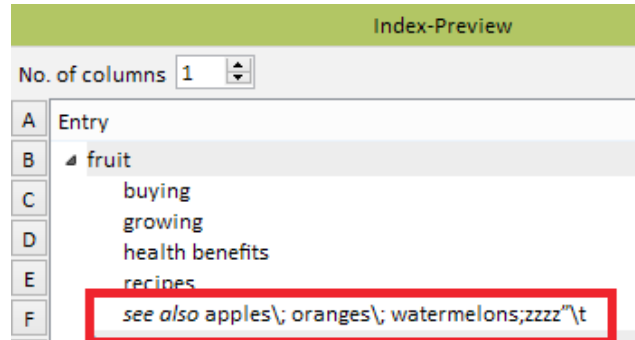

Fig. 4. Subheading after re-opening in Index-Manager.

in Figure 4. This is almost what we started with, but we have acquired "\t at the end (note this is our smart quote). If we now re-export the index, the corresponding XE entry will look like this:

> {XE "fruit:see also apples\; oranges\; watermelons;zzzz\"\t"}

Note the addition of a backslash before our smart quote, and an extra (straight) quote mark at the very end, after the \t. In effect, everything between the last semi-colon and the final quote mark has been interpreted as part of the sort code. If we refresh the index, we are back to having a page number after our cross-references:

> fruit
> 　buying 2, 4–6
> 　growing 10–12, 14, 16
> 　health benefits 2, 6–8, 16, 20
> 　recipes 25–30
> 　*see also* apples; oranges; watermelons 52

The remedy is another Find and Replace action, slightly different from before:

> Find:　zzzz\"
> Replace with:　zzzz"　[NB - smart quote]

Note we only need to delete the extraneous backslash – we can ignore the extra quote mark after the \t. If we refresh the index again, we get the result we want, and if we re-open the file in Index-Manager, our subheading appears the same as last time – it doesn't retain the extra quote mark.

So the bad news is that every time we export our subheading-cross-references from Index-Manager, we have to do some sort of Find and Replace in Word. The good news is that after the first time, we always use the same Find and Replace, and we don't lose our cross-references if we have to go back into Index-Manager.

You may still be wondering what happens if you use straight quotes rather than smart quotes. It doesn't make any difference to the index in Word, but if you re-open the file in Index-Manager with straight quotes before the \t switch, Index-Manager will read the entry not as a subheading but as a cross-reference. It looks like

p14 ➲ a subheading in the Index Preview (Fig. 5), but it is actually a cross-reference – an invalid one – and appears as such in the Cross-references Window (Fig. 6). So you will have to re-create your subheading, and you are in danger of losing the information altogether if you close Index-Manager without doing something about it, as invalid cross-references are discarded.

If you try out this method, you will soon realise there are many ways to adapt it according to your own preferences. There are also some additional points worth noting:

a) Subheadings, like any entry in Index-Manager, need to be anchored somewhere in the text. I find it helpful to anchor all my cross-reference subheadings in the same place, usually near the end of the text. This makes them easy to find. It also means you can easily copy (or indeed cut) and paste them into a separate Word file as a back-up, or to save constantly re-doing the Find and Replace routine – just paste them back in when you have exported from Index-Manager for the last time.

b) If you prefer your *see also* cross-references to be the first subheading rather than the last, just change the sort code to aaaa.

c) It's best not to add the sort code to individual *see also* cross-reference subheadings, but only to the single, combined, subheading. This is because Index-Manager
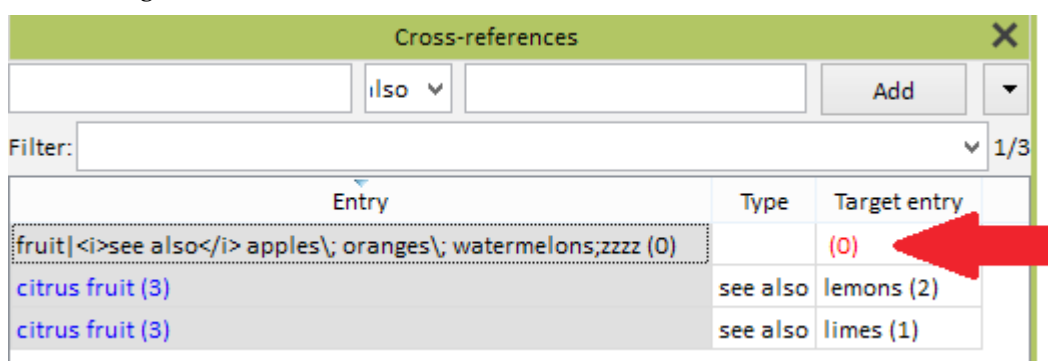

Fig. 5. Cross-reference masquerading as subheadings!

Fig. 6. Invalid cross-reference shows in red and will be lost.

will conflate entries that have the same sort code, even if the entries have different wording, and you can inadvertently overwrite entries and not even know you've done it.

Wendy Baskett
wbaskett@pinpointindexing.co.uk

CINDEX™: "And Why Would I Ever Need That?"

To meet changing production needs in the publishing industry, and thus new requirements placed upon indexers, we have introduced some capabilities now available in Cindex v.4.1. (Cindex v.4.1 is a free update for users currently running v.4.0, and is available as a paid upgrade from previous versions of the program.)

1 You can now export an index in the format required for embedding in Index-Manager. Import of indexes prepared in other indexing software has also been significantly enhanced.

2 We have tweaked the handling of reference locators to better serve the needs of indexers working for publishers (e.g. Oxford University Press) that require indexing to chapter and paragraph numbers, which are then automatically translated to page numbers later in the production process.

With this last change in mind, I would like to draw your attention to a new setting in the PAGE REFERENCES panel accessed from the DOCUMENT menu. At the bottom right of the panel you will see MERGE REDUNDANT REFERENCES in both Mac and Windows panels respectively.

Formerly, when Cindex displayed an index in the full format view it automatically hid 'stray' (redundant) page numbers that fell within an overlapping range of pages (e.g. 26, 26–30, 29, 30 would be displayed as 26–30). The new setting, merge redundant references, gives you control of whether the redundant references will be suppressed in the formatted output. It is checked by default, so Cindex ➲ *p16*

continues to behave as it did previously.

If you are indexing a text that does not have final pagination, but you must use chapter numbers, paragraph/section numbers, or line numbers (or some combination thereof), you will want to keep every single reference "as entered" for transfer to the publisher's system. Consequently you will need to uncheck the merge redundant references setting.

The new indexing requirements generally also have punctuation separating elements of the reference, e.g. 24:11 (chapter:paragraph), and you may end up with a range such as 24:11–24:12 in the record entry, which you will need to represent exactly, i.e. include the prefix (24:) in front of the second number in the range.

If your PREFERENCES are set so that Cindex will COMPLETE PAGE RANGES when you are adding or editing records, Cindex will now add the prefix when completing a range (formerly, it added only the last element of a compound reference).

"But wait a minute", I hear you mutter, "I'm just doing regular indexing with a volume:page number reference construct. I have final page proofs and do not need the repeated volume number". Do not despair, the suppression feature at MULTI-PART REFERENCES will take care of this for you; a setting you would likely be activating anyway when indexing with a volume;page number construct, as shown in Fig. 3 from the Mac panel.

And remember, there are additional formatting options available in the RANGES and PUNCTUATION boxes:
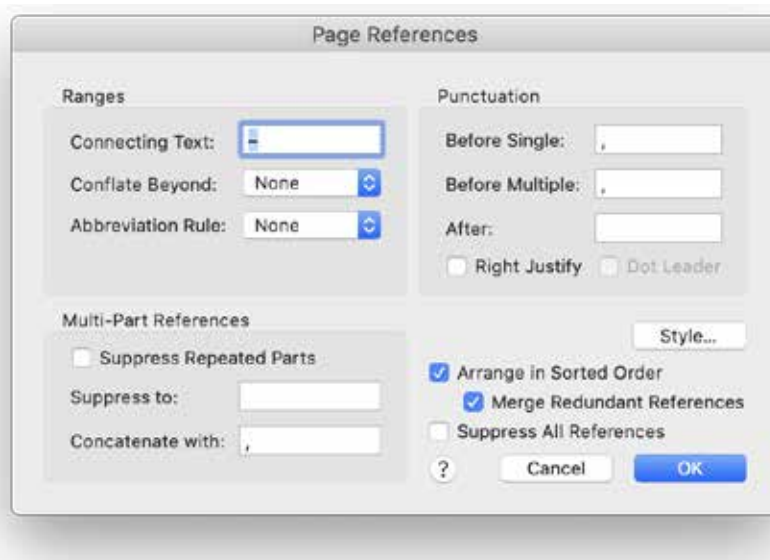
• Automatically providing an en-

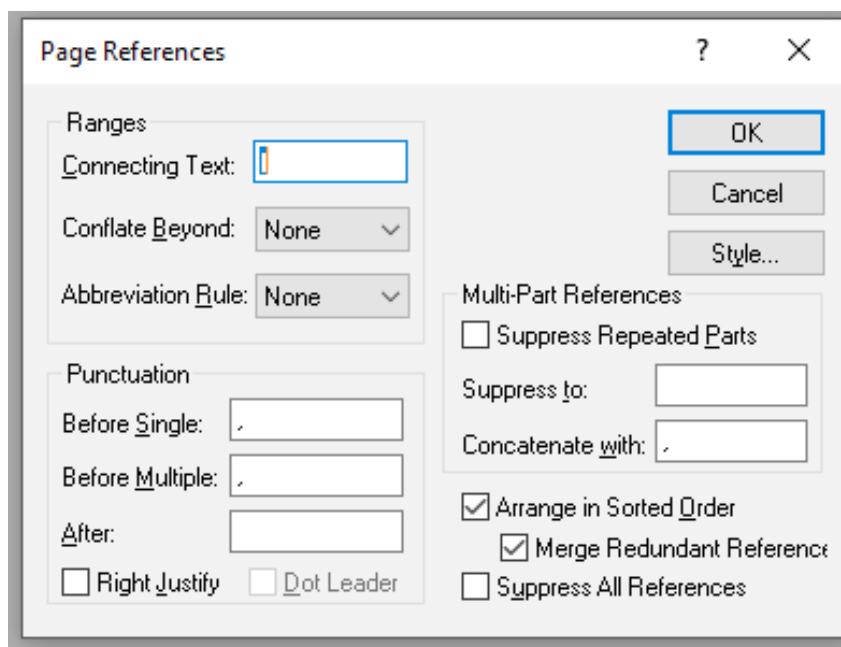*Fig. 1. Merge Redundant References in Mac*

Fig. 2. Merge Redundant References in Windows

dash to separate components of a range, so that you don't have to worry about extra keyboarding or coding.

• Conflating individual, sequential locators, e.g., 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, to a range 12–16 if you wish, or as your client requires.
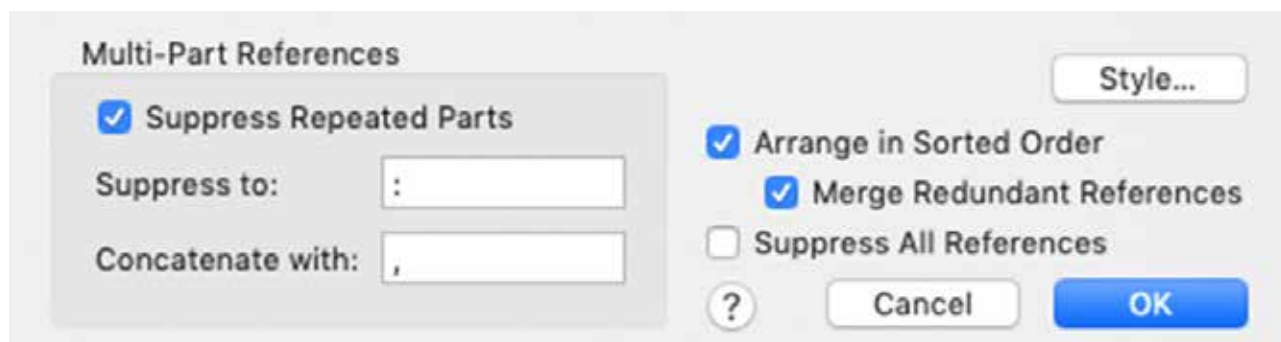

Fig. 3 . Suppressing repeated parts – the Mac panel.

• Abbreviating page ranges automatically per standard conventions.

• Inserting appropriate punctuation at the end of the text of an entry and before and/or after the locator(s). The default setting is a "comma space" to separate text and locator(s). Generally the BEFORE SINGLE and BEFORE MULTIPLE settings will be the same. Legal indexes, which often have lengthy and complex locator structures,

employ variable settings to alert the user to the number of locators being provided.

• If you are asked to provide a tab character between end of entry text and locator(s) you will do the following: (a) strip the characters in the BEFORE SINGLE and BEFORE MULTIPLE boxes and (b) click the RIGHT JUSTIFY box. When displayed in FULL FORMAT VIEW you will see the locators shift toward the right-hand margin, but any formatted

output file (e.g. RTF) will have a tab character inserted between end of text entry and start of the locators. The client will define the value of the tab on their typesetting system.

Please note that these settings affect only the appearance of the index in FULL FORMAT view. They have no effect on the content of index records.

Frances Lennie
Indexing Research
www@indexres.com

Local Groups

London

With the possibility of meeting in London out of the question until next spring, five London group members had a Zoom catch-up in September. **Non Evans**, our youngest member, was delighted that schools had finally gone back, but one or two others, especially those who live alone, were feeling a sense of isolation, especially with the new restrictions coming into force.

Most of the discussion centred on work. One member has received quite a lot of editing work for a society that specialises in lung research and most seemed to have received a steady stream of work. Since bookshops have been allowed to open, it seems that many people are buying books rather than ebooks, which is encouraging. We talked about the dilemmas posed when a friend asks for an index – how much it is reasonable to charge and what happens if they have views on the index that don't accord with our professional standards.

On COVID-19 news, we talked about the problems of safe public transport and how payment is now mostly contactless, although it is possible to quarantine coins and to wash notes.

Rohan Bolton
london@indexers.org.uk

Sussex

Six of the Sussex Group members met, again by Zoom, on 14 September. Members reported that, despite the pandemic, work was still coming through and those who wanted to be

were still busy. The academic indexers among us wondered about the impact of the pandemic on academic publishing for the next few months; would there be a book boom, because lockdown had provided time to write, or a drought as teaching academics focused on moving to online delivery? We had a discussion about general software: one member had been transitioning from Mac to PC and was finding their new working environment a challenge. Other members had switched from Microsoft Office products to Open Office or Libre Office, and were finding advantages beyond the cost savings; the spellcheck function was particularly praised. However, those of us doing embedded indexing will continue to need Microsoft Word. We also talked about workplace set-up and the importance of finding a mouse you can use comfortably. We'll continue to have meetings by Zoom for the foreseeable future, to avoid members having to take unnecessary journeys.

Tanya Izzard
sussex@indexers.org.uk

Three Choirs

Until recently we had been Zooming every two weeks. As we were all getting out more than at the beginning of all this, we decided in September that we would have the Zoom meetings once every four weeks for a while, ever hopeful that we might be able to get together for real before too long. We always start by talking indexing, so that we can

cover any issues anyone wants to talk about. Then we might talk about anything from what we are watching on telly to the latest books we are reading. It is good to chat and have a few minutes with friends. Most of the time the meetings are the usual 40-minute sessions.

At an earlier meeting, a regular visitor from CIEP mentioned (foolishly?) that she had taken a project management course so I asked her to tell us about it at our next meeting. Many thanks to Deb Webb for taking time to tell us about her course and her profession.

Pam Scholefield
threechoirs@indexers.org.uk

Yorkshire

In normal times, the Yorkshire group has a regular pattern of annual meetings – a peer review, an outing, a CPD-type session and a Christmas lunch (combined with an AGM). At our planning meeting last December, we had agreed to meet in Sheffield in September for a session on "speeding up and making a decent hourly rate", a topic dear to the hearts of many indexers, especially those in the early years of their careers. Despite not being able to meet in person, we held a very successful Zoom meeting on the topic on 8 October, led by group leader **Melanie Gee**. In addition to several Yorkshire members (**Ruth Ellis**, **Ann Kingdom** and **Sheree Mosley**) we were delighted to welcome members from the Northeast (**Alan Rutter**), West Anglia (SI chair **Nicola** ➲ *p18*

King) and Three Choirs (**Pam Scholefield** and **Helen Taylor**). Participants ranged from those with many years' experience to a student embarking on Unit B of the training course.

Prior to the meeting, Mel had circulated a useful list of possible discussion points and helped to keep us focused on these by sharing her screen with an image of the main topic headings (see figure). Inevitably we wandered slightly off-topic from time to time, but during the session (about an hour and a half) we at least touched on most of these, covering some in more detail.

On metrics, participants mentioned using their indexing software to analyse the time spent on a project, compute hourly rates and make comparisons between different types of books and different clients. It was suggested that it could take a couple of years to achieve a reasonable hourly rate and that, as you build up experience, you gradually get a feel for which types of project will help you to achieve (and, indeed, exceed) your target rates. Having sight of a text, or at least a few chapters, is certainly important in judging whether to take on a project. However tempting it may be, try to

avoid books that you know will be harder to index (and therefore more time-consuming), because of subject matter or level of treatment. Some books are a dream to index while others (dense philosophy texts were mentioned) can be rather more of a chore. Similarly, it is sometimes possible to 'bash out' an index, but this can be rather a soulless experience, whereas indexing a more interesting and intellectually stimulating book will prove much more enjoyable (not something that can be quantified). The importance of not accepting low rates was emphasised, but having the confidence to ask for better rates also comes with experience.

Time management is a skill that freelancers must master. Suggestions included using your time effectively by working out when you are most productive (and doing less intellectually demanding tasks when you're not), carefully planning a project right at the beginning, with targets of how many pages to index each day (though perhaps aiming for fewer pages per day for the first few chapters) and using features in your indexing software (e.g. labels in Sky) to mark, for example, entries that might need to be finalised later (especially in the early stages, when you're

getting to grips with the subject matter). One (possibly stressful) way to build up indexing speed is to take on books with very short deadlines, forcing you to make compromises (e.g. fewer headings for concepts) but hopefully resulting in a 'good enough' index. In addition to time pressure, such compromises may also have to be made due to budgetary pressures and space constraints – accepting longer 'strings' than is ideal, for example, rather than breaking entries down with subheadings too early in the indexing process that later have to be deleted. And taking regular breaks is an important aspect of time management, with knotty problems often resolving themselves when you return to them.

Opinion is divided on whether to mark up (perhaps it depends on how one's brain works), although it seems that nowadays there may not be time for this. However, everyone agreed it's important to skim through the whole book first, to get a feel for the shape of the text, the relative importance of different topics and so on, rather than just launching into the actual indexing process. It also helps to identify serious problems, such as missing text and illustrations and duplicated text. Reading

the introduction and final chapter in more detail can also be time well spent. Other tips included:

- using templates for different clients or different types of book, with autocomplete for frequent terms already in place

- entering glossary terms initially and setting autocomplete for these

- making several passes through a text for different kinds of entries (e.g. entering cited authors as a separate task)

- learning keyboard shortcuts available in the indexing software, perhaps trying to learn a new one on each project. Ruth also alerted us to https://usefulshortcuts.com/downloads/ALT-Codes.pdf which is an invaluable time-saver, especially for accented characters.

- avoiding spell-checking by cutting and pasting from the pdf file, which can be done very efficiently using Margaret Berson's macros.

Editing is an important stage of the indexing process but when should it be done? The general consensus was that editing the index as you go along is more efficient, perhaps at the end of each day, or the end of each chapter (see also the SI online workshop on editing the index). It also provides a welcome change of task from inputting new entries. And as one progresses through the book, solutions to what appeared at first to be tricky problems gradually suggest themselves. Some tasks, however, may be best left to the end, such as making double entries.

Mel was leading the Zoom meeting from her new garden office and this led into how one's working environment can improve efficiency. Separating home and work can help to avoid distractions that interrupt one's train of thought, though Pam pointed out that retreating to the warmth of her dining room during winter months had certain advantages, forcing her to take breaks to deal with domestic tasks. All were agreed, however, on the importance of having two monitors, or one large one, in order to have the pdf of the text and indexing software both visible. And as far as possible your workstation should not exacerbate musculoskeletal problems associated with long periods sitting at your computer. An aching back is not going to help you to think clearly about the finer points of term selection.

Building in time to get to grips with new software (specifically Index-Manager) was touched upon. Time spent on CPD can reap dividends if it leads to new types of clients or projects which may pay better, and offering a greater range of indexing services is likely to lead to greater job security for the freelancer. An ASI webinar on creating and maintaining speed in indexing can be accessed by SI for a very modest fee.

Ann Kingdom
ann.kingdom@googlemail.com

Who's Who