

Sidelights

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NEWSLETTER OF THE
**society of
indexers**
information from A to Z



Taking a walk out of the office? Dry stone walling and a spectacular view down the Cartmel Valley are where Lindsay Buckle heads (see 'My Neck of the Woods', p 8).

Editorial

There's something peculiarly ageing about a new decade. An era that was ever up ahead, even a sort of shorthand for the distant future, is suddenly the present, the time we're living in. The recently deceased, those we loved or knew or merely admired from afar, are now formally 'historical'. Jacques Loussier and Toni Morrison, Bibi Andersson and Jonathan Miller are pre-2020s figures, sealed in the past.

Embarking on a new cycle is exhilarating. Enduring it alone tests one's mettle. We freelancers and home-workers know just what it is to be self-sufficient. We pursue our own projects, organise our own offices, manage our own finances, dictate our own pace. If we have a partner and/or a family, they can help or hinder, be absorbed into our schedules or worked around. But the presence of others in the same home as the workplace cannot be guaranteed forever. At some point, one will be bereaved if one does not, as the saying is, "go first". Children may scatter far away, be overwhelmed by their own lives and problems, become estranged, even – is anything worse? – predecease us. We cannot be sure that we will not find ourselves in solitary circumstances. If solitariness is unfamiliar, it may prove seriously debilitating.

The dawn of a decade is an appropriate time to review plans. If we turn out to be spared for the duration, we shall ourselves move into another decade of our own, and each span brings its subtle and not-so-subtle changes. If we're not already proceeding alone, we need to contemplate the possibility of doing so. A network of friends and contacts is an essential augmentation of a significant other or an immediate family. Modern technology allows easy and rapid communication and can certainly be both a metaphorical and a literal lifesaver. But it may too easily be taken for granted. Individuals still slip through the cracks. None of us wants to be marooned alone at home by the stealthy advance of dementia or by sudden immobilisation. To set up a regular phone call or email in order to touch base with a key-holding contact who will understand that its absence requires investigation is a simple precaution for anyone living alone or aware that such an exigency is by no means to be discounted.

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Missed an article in *Sidelights*?
Back issues and the cumulative index for 2006–2015 are on [the website](#)

April 2020 *Sidelights*

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Presidential Musings

Just before Christmas, I found myself rereading James Gleick's book *The Information: A History, A Theory, A Flood*. And buried in this book – which deals with the basic history and maths of information theory, and which I recommend to anyone with a curious mind – is a fact so marmalade-dropping, so wonderful and unexpected, that I share it with you here. It is that we have a pretty good estimate as to how much information there is in the universe. That is: 10^{90} bits.

By "bit", as the book explains, we don't mean pieces, but binary digits – those little yes/no, "present Miss"/"absent Miss" flipflops that add up (when collected in vast numbers) to football results, or telephone conversations, or books, or helium atoms. This seems to me – the idea that there's a finite, more or less countable, amount of information in the universe – just magically exciting.

I wanted to say "infinitely exciting" but that's impossible. The most exciting it could be, we now know, would be 10^{90} , wouldn't it? And that would involve converting all those books and football results into units of excitement, along the way leaving nobody to be excited in the first place. (At this point, I fear, my grasp of information theory may be starting to show its limitations.)

Anyway, it seems to me that for indexers – people who trade not just in information, but in the organising of information – this sort of thing ought to be of interest. Information, as Gleick explains it, is sort of anti-entropy: it's structure amid randomness. So what I wonder is whether, when you make an index, you are adding to the quantity of information in the universe, or performing the equivalent of compressing a file, or altering the noise-to-signal ratio?

These are declaredly "musings", so I hope it won't be held against me that I don't know the answer to these questions. But to end with another pleasing point: that figure of 10^{90} is staggeringly large but easy to write down on account of the number 90 in superscript. Know what they call that? Yup. An index.

Sam Leith



Society News

Executive Board Report

The Executive Board last met on 15 November and confirmed unanimously that **Nicola King** should continue as chair. The membership of EB is unchanged from last year: see Who's Who [p 16]. Despite appeals, the Board is still without a Finance Director. Financial matters are currently being monitored by EB members but any SI member interested in this role should contact Nicola (chair@indexers.org.uk).

New members were approved;

new joiners were down considerably on the unusually high 2018 intake. A review of membership trends **p3**

CONGRATULATIONS TO

New Advanced Members
MSocInd(Adv)

Samantha Clark – Guiseley, Leeds

New Accredited Indexer
MSocInd

Andrea Thompson – Cambridge

p2 will take place after the 2020 renewals period. **Ruth Ellis** presented a project plan for 2020 renewals which was approved for implementation.

Recommended indexing rates were reviewed, and EB agreed to increase these by 1.5% in line with the current rate of inflation. As of 31 December, the rates are £25.90 an hour, £2.90 a page or £7.80 per thousand words for an index to a straightforward text.

Ann Hudson gave an update on progress with implementation of the

fifth edition of the training course, and **Jan Worrall** reported on progress with the new Fellowship model. Jan had also completed the online workshop on eBook indexing, which was now ready to launch [see p 11].

Nicola and **Paula Clarke Bain** reported on the in-house workshop they ran at Cambridge University Press in October 2019; this had included discussion of SI members' issues with current industry practice [see **Behind the Chair** below]. To extend the publishers' workshop offer more widely, Ann Hudson has prepared an

online *Indexing for Editors* workshop, which will be available shortly.

Rosi Dear reported that feedback on the 2019 Conference had praised the location, accommodation and programme, although catering had been poorly received. Planning for the 2020 Conference is in hand; this will take place in Birmingham in October [see p 5]. National Indexing Day will take place on 31 March with an event to be held in London.

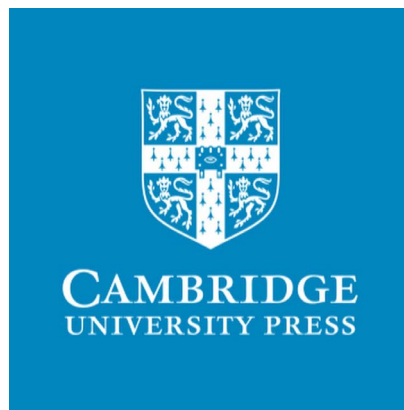
Tanya Izzard, Minutes Secretary
tanya@tanyaizzard.co.uk

Behind the Chair

Happy new year. I'm writing this on New Year's Eve, looking down the telescope into our future and back into our past. At the end of October, **Paula Clarke Bain** and I visited Cambridge University Press to talk to their editors and production staff about indexing and how they might encourage authors to improve their indexes. I think we got the point over that indexing is not a trivial matter, that trying to ask authors to also embed indexes makes it a lot harder for them and that professional indexers are in a much better place to do this work.

CUP is definitely moving towards having embedded indexes completed before manuscript delivery, although they will still be accepting embedded indexes created during copy editing, 'tagging' on pdf during copy editing or proofs and as a last resort using page numbers on proofs. Having the authors compile indexes seems to be a cost-saving option for CUP because the 'cost' is pushed onto the author. If the author decides to have a professional index done, the cost to them will likely be higher than if CUP paid for the index because generally the rates the CUP or their outsourced suppliers will pay for indexing are lower than individual indexers would quote.

So, what's in it for us? It is good to see thirty names listing embedded indexing in the SI Directory (as of 31 December). It would be great to see more. There is probably more work out there than these thirty people can cope with, and some of it will



be going to indexers outside the UK, as well as non-SI members in the UK. **Jan Worrall's** new e-indexing workshop [see p 11] is intended to give indexers more confidence in dealing with embedded indexing. So, if you've taken the 'Embedded Indexing in Word' workshop, this is a useful next step. If you're hesitating about adding embedded indexing to your list of skills, don't forget that you probably won't be considered for CUP work if you don't offer it. I get enquiries quite frequently for CUP work, and have had to pass all of them on because either it won't fit into my schedule, because they want it *now* or the schedule has slipped and it is clashing with other work so it is best if I pass it on. When I pass this work on, I try to give details about other indexers who are offering embedding in an appropriate subject field. Indexers offering embedding should be updating their CUP contacts with this information

so that the CUP in-house pool of indexers is up to date.

Glancing backwards through the telescope of time, I have been looking at how indexers have been recorded in census returns, with a view to writing a short article for *The Indexer*. It has been a salutary lesson in how any historical research relies on accurate transcription of terms, and anyone using bulk sources such as the census returns is at the mercy of the accuracy of scanning technology. The website I have been searching has offered up the following terms, amongst others, in response to searches for 'indexer' – India (Office, Army, Rubber), Independent, Gardening, and Ind Coope (the brewery). I have submitted dozens of 'corrections', so hopefully people who were looking for these subjects will get what they are looking for in future and not get bogged down with Index Clerks as I have been.

Membership renewals

I'd like to thank **Paul Machen** (SI Office Manager) and **Ruth Ellis** (EB Internet Wrangler) for making the renewal process easier this year, and I hope you all will have renewed your membership in time to take advantage of the early payment discount rate. Not having to spend weeks chasing up membership payments is a great advantage to Paul because it allows him to get on with other things.

Nicola King
chair@indexers.org.uk

On Joining the EB

Let me introduce myself . . .

I completed the SI training course in 2014 and for various reasons made a pretty gradual transition from other freelance work, so indexing has been my principal occupation for about three years now. Subject-wise it's brought me back to Classics, which I studied at university, and it's been nice to de-rust my Latin and Greek and learn more about papyrology and various other fields, as I scratch away in the niche of indexing scholarly Classics books. I work more broadly than that too, of course, but generally somewhere on a historical/art-historical/literary/philosophical/archaeological spectrum. I live in Kent with my partner, a law librarian, and attend London group meetings when I can.

The Secretaryship is an EB appointment rather than a membership-elected role. It's one I slipped into somewhat stealthily in the summer of 2018 on the

basis of realising that the job description probably wasn't actually beyond me, and yes, I could help. I think it's dangerously easy, when a call for nominations or request for volunteers for a specific role goes out, to assume that "they don't mean me", that perhaps you're too inexperienced an indexer, or don't feel you know enough about how the Society works, or don't really know other members. But because volunteers are so vital to us, and indexers' ranges of skills and backgrounds are so various, I'd really encourage everyone to consider calls for volunteers as if they absolutely were personally addressed to you (yes, you).

It's also a role with legal and administrative functions on behalf of the Executive Board, but where I don't technically have a vote on its decisions: I attend and have a voice in EB meetings but am not an official decision-taker for the Society. Being part of the EB has strengthened my



relationship with and appreciation of the Society, and my awareness of the deep expertise and dedication of other board members. We're going to be needing some new blood on the EB later this year as three-year terms expire and I hope to be able to continue working with inspiring and impressive fellow-indexers for a few years to come.

Philippa Jevons
secretary@indexers.org.uk

Judy Louise Batchelor 1934–2019

Judy joined the Society of Indexers in 1977 as a freelance indexer, copy editor and proofreader specialising in the arts and humanities. Living in Hanwell, she regularly attended the SI meetings held in London. She was elected to Council in 1981 and was successively vice-chair, membership secretary, member of *The Indexer's* editorial board and editor of the society newsletter.

She was a prolific contributor to *The Indexer*: her entry in the *Cumulative Index to The Indexer Volumes 1–21* runs to 35 lines. She often wrote, most perceptively and fluently, of the nature of indexers.

In 1983, in a Letter to the Editor, she gave an elegant definition of indexing:

there are rules, systems and conventions to follow . . .
But there is surely in a good index, however simple, an extra process: a balancing of analysis and synthesis, of reason and imagination; a drawing-in of the author's mind as revealed in his written words, and a reshaping in our own minds to make a retrieval-tool through which the author's thoughts may be made accessible to the composite mind of the reader as we intuitively conceive it . . . we must be humble – we are only to serve the book, and perhaps Apollo on our better days.

In 1985 she considered the personality of the indexer:

It has been suggested often that there is a common indexerly nature . . . indeed that indexers may be fixated at one of the less attractive of Freud's psychosexual

stages: that we see disorder as a sort of obscenity, that we censoriously deny the natural overflowing abundance of life and grasp at logical hierarchies as a way of reducing the boundless universe to something that will fit the mean smallness of our timid mentalities . . . [rather is] the indexerly mind floating free, creative, full of possibilities: the world its book, world and mind alike to be enlarged, and simultaneously diminished, by the delicate momentary attachment of a network of cognitive relationships.

When she stepped down from editing the newsletter in 1995, I wrote: "Judy Batchelor, in her previous capacity as a member of the editorial board of *The Indexer*, contributed to it copiously and splendidly: many of our most readable pages came from her. She gave us reviews, conference reports, insights . . . I lamented her going from the journal's board to take on the *SI Newsletter*, and the cessation of her contributions; but have to admit that her flair for arrangement, conscientiousness in administration, and generosity in all her dealings made her as astoundingly good an editor as a writer. Now that she has handed over the *Newsletter* – please, Judy, blank pages in *The Indexer* eagerly await your fluent and graceful pen".

Judy resigned from SI in 2003, and was much missed. It is shocking to learn that so sprightly a brain as hers fell victim to dementia for the last ten years of her life.

Hazel Bell

Website

Membership renewals are well under way as I write this, so the redesigned system seems to be working as expected. As a reminder, if you are paying by bank transfer, make sure you remember to actually make the transfer promptly so that Paul doesn't have to chase you up.

There have been a number of behind-the-scenes tweaks to the website to improve forum performance and also to allow some new file types in our 'library' in readiness for two new online workshops (at least one of which will have been launched by the time you read this; see p 11). We can now share PowerPoint slideshows on the website and so I have added in my 'lightning talk' from the conference on updating your directory entry. You can find it along with other useful directory guidance

[here](#). The new year may be a good time to review your directory entry and update it.

Table 1 shows where site visitors have come from when first accessing the site during 2019. As is normal for any site, the majority comes from either searches or direct links. Although the share from other sites may seem small, it is these links that ensure that we achieve high rankings in search results. There are, of course, hits from individual indexers' own websites and these contribute to the overall total.

The main group of visitors are our own members, so the top pages visited will be dominated by areas of interest to us.

Ruth Ellis

website@indexers.org.uk

Referrer site	Visitors	% Share
Search engines	7759	51.88
Direct link: bookmark, email, etc.	5835	39.02
Wikipedia	250	1.59
sfep.org.uk	169	1.08
Facebook	230	1.50
Twitter	322	2.06
nationalcareers.service.gov.uk	149	0.95
afepi.ie	123	0.79
anzsi.org	81	0.52
linkedin.com	20	0.13
societyofauthors.org	18	0.11
indexers.ca	16	0.10
theguardian	5	0.03
theindexer.org	5	0.03

Table 1 ABOVE: How visitors have arrived at the SI website
Table 2 RIGHT: Pages visited on the site

Page	Views	% Share
Forums home page and topics page	22637	12.58
Home	19107	10.62
Log In	9343	5.19
Directory of Professional Indexers	7399	4.11
Indexing fees	3967	2.21
Training course overview/features	2752	1.53
Training course	2630	1.46
A career in indexing	2560	1.42
Training course prices and ordering	1556	0.87
Membership levels/renewal	1512	0.84
Member resources	1344	0.75
Shop	1135	0.63
Establishing a career	941	0.52
About indexing	909	0.51
Indexing qualifications	894	0.50
Commissioning an index	866	0.48

Conference 2020

It's that time again, when we all wake up on the first day of the year (eventually), bright-eyed and bushy-tailed (possibly) and bursting with good intentions. Time to start working on our CPD plan of action for the coming year and, possibly, for the coming decade. So what better start than

putting the date of this year's conference

Tuesday 6 October
in your diary?

This year we shall be returning to The Studio in **Birmingham**, a dedicated conference space in the heart of England, just a stone's throw from Birmingham New Street

station. There will, as always, be a variety of academic and practical sessions on offer for both students and established indexers, and plenty of time for networking and catching up with old friends and making new ones.

Rosi Dear
conference@indexers.org.uk

Helen Bilton on studying homelessness and languages

I finished the Society of Indexers course in 2006, gained my first commission that year and have been picking up indexing work ever since, with a few months off in 2009/10 when I had my third child. I find the flexibility invaluable when it comes to combining paid work with my actual job, which is raising my family – I don't work full-time hours and do occasionally do other kinds of paid work, but indexing makes up the bulk of the work-for-money that I do. The freedom of freelancing allows time for other things too: I'm also a school governor, a babywearing educator (supporting and advising new parents on how to use slings and carriers with their babies) and help out at a couple of local charities, the school and the Scouts.

I remember vividly the moment I first hit on the idea of an indexing career – I was sitting on my living room floor in 2002 reading the CILIP magazine whilst rocking my tiny baby daughter to sleep, and spotted an advert in the back. I can't actually remember if it was before or after I'd made the decision not to go back to my job after maternity leave finished, but it was a definite light-bulb moment as I thought "I could do that" and I sent off for details straightaway.

The reason I was reading CILIP *Update* (which, if you don't know, was the journal for library and information professionals) is that at that time I was a member. My job, the one I was on maternity leave from, involved working as an information manager in St Mungo's, a large London homelessness charity. My colleague and I were responsible for producing all the organisation's internal and external statistics and management information, conducting research and writing reports, producing directories, handbooks and databases and generally signposting other members of staff to sources of information. The organisation had very generously enabled me, both financially and by allowing day-release, to study for my MSc in Information Science at City University where I'd waddled across the stage to graduate, eight-and-a-half months pregnant, earlier that year.

Part of the Masters was a dissertation, and my chosen topic involved constructing a taxonomy of terms involved with homelessness to be used to categorise and label resources. Much useful information in the homelessness world falls into the category of 'grey' literature, so doesn't necessarily come with tags, keywords or Library of Congress headings already assigned; plus, as in any specialist area, terms often have their own meanings.

Working for a homelessness charity was, as you can probably imagine, both rewarding and challenging. We occasionally went out on street counts, which involved midnight trawls of London's streets simply counting people sleeping rough. We visited hostels and day centres, and most importantly we spent time listening to people's stories in order to get a bigger picture. We analysed statistics from dozens of different angles and put a lot of effort into trying to work out metrics to measure



A St Mungo's hostel

people's 'progress' through the system and out the other side into housing and a more stable life. Homelessness is an extraordinarily complex issue and one that is not easily alleviated, and we did a lot of research into causes, effects and potential solutions.

This was mainly qualitative research and there are a surprising number of crossovers between qualitative data analysis and indexing. Whether the source data is completed questionnaires or audio-recorded interviews, analysing it involves processing large amounts of material with a critical eye, picking out concepts which may or may not be described with different words and then synthesising it back into something useful.

But my job was in London, my husband also worked in London, and we'd moved out to Sussex not long before our daughter was born. I had intended to rejoin St Mungo's and had arranged for a three-day week plus one day work-from-home, but when it came down to it I just couldn't bear the thought of both of us being forty miles away from her, especially as we had no local family and didn't know anyone else, being new to the area. So I had one of the hardest phone calls of my life, telling my boss I wasn't coming back. In true St Mungo's style, however, they were extraordinarily kind. They didn't charge me for the Masters but they set me off on my freelance career by giving me some research work, which I started when my daughter was six months old. I continued to do qualitative research projects for them for over ten years, until the organisation merged with

p6 ↻ another one and they changed the research commissioning process to include tendering which I, as a lone freelancer, just couldn't keep up with.

It's hard to say what drew me so strongly to the advert in the CILIP magazine. I guess the fact that I'd chosen to construct a taxonomy for my Masters dissertation meant I knew I was interested in working with words and concepts and organising information. I already knew what indexing was, and my training in Information Science meant I already had appropriate skills of managing, synthesising and signposting information. I loved working in an information department helping people find the right piece of information at the right time. Working in publishing appealed as I adore books, always have. And most of all, freelancing appealed as I really wanted to be at home with my daughter, and later the two sons that came along as well. I also knew that it would suit my personality to work alone and flexibly.

We found a local nursery that we really liked and our daughter went there two mornings a week while I worked either on my research projects or on the Society of Indexers course. In 2004, I had my older son so took a year-long break from study and finally graduated in 2006. I found I was right: both the intellectual work of indexing and the solo freelancing suit me. I always make sure I have plenty of other work (usually unpaid) involving being part of a team to balance it out. However, when my youngest finishes primary school in 2020, I will probably step that up even more as I won't have the daily school-gate contact any more.

Information work itself was something I really more or less lucked out on. It was never part of the plan, just something I kind of fell into. I went to university after school to study Spanish, Russian and linguistics. Spanish I had studied at A-level, but Russian and linguistics were

new. I still love those subjects now, although the Russian is as rusty as an old nail. Linguistics is one of my specialist indexing subjects that I actively seek out and I have recently taken on some work in Spanish too. Although there's no direct link to the process of indexing itself, there are many aspects of linguistics that are useful – understanding how certain aspects of grammar such as morphology work can be useful, for example. My original career plan was more directly linked to linguistics; I wanted to be a speech and language therapist and had a place to study a Masters at Sheffield. However, back then there was no funding for the course, and by that time I was engaged and we wanted to be together, so I forfeited my place and got work temping instead. My fiancé and I moved to London for his accountancy job and I picked up more temping work whilst applying for admin/office jobs in the not-for-profit sector. The job at St Mungo's was a small step up from an admin job really when I started – they needed someone with good general skills, good Excel and Word and an ability to analyse information and write reports. Over the years I was there, it developed into a much more substantial information-based role.

So indexing was never something I aimed for, but once I saw that advert everything dropped into place and now I love it and am very happy doing it. My back-up plan, should the Artificial Intelligence bots end up capable of producing passable-enough indexes (which I believe to be entirely possible once someone gets around to feeding enough embedded-indexed texts into the machines) is to tutor languages. I've done a little of that already and found it both fun and rewarding. However, it's currently paused while I see my older children through 2020, which contains both GCSEs and A-Levels, and that, as I said in my first paragraph, is my real job.

The Indexer

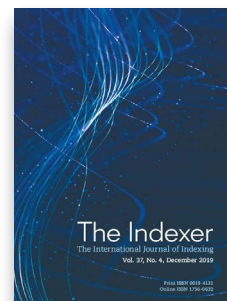
The International Journal of Indexing

Articles in Volume 37, Issue 4 (December 2019) include:

Outsourcing in publishing
Kathryn Munt

International cooperation in indexing
Glenda Browne

China Legal Thesaurus project
Qian Chonghao, Liu Joan Lijun, Lin Yanping



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Lindsay Buckle on the delights of Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria

If, after a long morning sweating over a heavy set of proofs, you walk along the narrow lane behind our house for about half a mile, you come to the bottom of a very steep hill. If you then follow the lane up this hillside to the top, you have a surprise, for right in front of you is a small reservoir. Go through the kissing gate to the dam and turn round – there is a spectacular view down the Cartmel Valley to the sea. (You may of course have already seen this as your bursting lungs will have required you to stop and ‘admire the view’ several times on the way up, but it is worth stopping to look properly).

The valley is a patchwork of small villages, isolated farms and walled fields, mostly filled with sheep. This is where, over thirty years ago, we found a house that we could afford and that was actually for sale (we were very good at spotting ruins in corners of fields that we hoped would come on the market but never did). At the time, we were living near Barrow-in-Furness where we both worked, but we wanted to be out of town with preferably neither pavements nor street lights and to have a good view. This house, situated very close to the main A590, provided all this and cut travelling south to visit our families by about 45 minutes. Although the address is officially Grange-over-Sands, we are in fact a few miles away. Both Kendal and Ulverston are within easy reach and I can be (literally) *in* Lake Windermere in about 15 minutes.

The area around our hamlet is a maze of narrow lanes.

We can go on a different walk every day of the week and frequently we don't meet a single car. According to a copy of the 1840 Ordnance Survey map of the area, it has changed very little, other than the addition of tarmac to the roads. Many of the dry stone walls and hedges are very old indeed. A few of the lanes on the map that don't go anywhere in particular are now bridleways so with a bit of imagination you can go time-travelling as you walk along them.

To take another outing, this time in the car, we can get to Grange itself. Today I am going the pretty way via Cartmel, where there is a beautiful Priory built by William Marshall in the 12th century. Henry VIII dissolved the monastery, but the Priory itself was retained as the parish church. Cartmel has a racecourse and the ground

is also used for agricultural shows and other outdoor events. Unless you care for horse-racing, it's best avoided on race days. Cartmel is also where the Sticky Toffee Pudding shop is, though they don't actually make the puddings there any longer.

Between Cartmel and Grange is Hampsfell, which I have discovered is the 14,009th highest peak in Britain. On the top is the Hospice, which is a stone shelter with a viewing platform on top. The view from here is stupendous on a clear day (Google ‘Hampsfell views’ for photos far better than I can take). From here you can see the Lake District mountains, the Pennines, Morecambe Bay, Blackpool Tower, the Furness Fells and the offshore wind farms. The Hospice is on the Cistercian Way, which was used by pilgrims en route to Furness Abbey in Barrow, stopping at Cartmel for rest and shelter. For those interested in geology this is also a good place to see limestone pavement. And there's a lot of sheep....

Grange is on the south side of Hampsfell and is built up its lower flanks. The town has proper shops, and although there are three convenience stores, the rest are run by independent retailers. There is little you cannot buy here (apart from fuel for your car). Bread, meat, fruit and vegetables are of a very high quality, mostly locally sourced, and a number of shops have received national awards for their products. There are also quite a few gift shops and eateries, also of a high standard.

One of the problems of living in Grange is that every-

body knows everybody else, so you will be addressed by name in most of the shops, even if you are pretty certain you've never mentioned it. As I have lived here for a long time, it is almost impossible to visit the town without at least saying ‘hello’ to half a dozen people – sometimes shopping can take a very long time.

Below the main shopping street runs the main

road from the M6 and the A590, through the town and out along the coast to the fishing village of Flookburgh. The first thing you see on coming into the town from this direction is the railway station. The railway is how Grange came to exist, or at least, it was only a small fishing village before that. It arrived in 1857 with the Victorians and Edwardians developing it into a seaside resort. Most of the town's architecture



The 12th-century Cartmel Priory, now a parish church



Grange Edwardian Festival

p8 ☺ is Edwardian and every summer there is an Edwardian Festival in the Park Gardens where there are also brass band concerts on summer Sunday afternoons – if you should visit on one of the rare occasions when a steam train passes through, then you find yourself in another time warp.

The railway line itself runs between the promenade and the town, so protecting the prom from becoming a built-up concrete abomination lined with souvenir shops and amusement arcades. Instead it is a mile-long, level (most unusual in Cumbria) walkway with flowers and shrubs on one side and Morecambe Bay with its sands and mud flats to the other. The prom is a popular place, with two cafes, a recreation ground and a children's playground. At one end is the station and at the other is the now-derelict lido, which holds a special place in the hearts of many residents. Since it closed in the early 1990's, there have been numerous campaigns to renovate and reopen it. On the last Sunday of the summer months, weather permitting, the promenade is host to Prom Art, a huge art and craft fair.

Many people ask why the shore is grassy (you even find sheep grazing on it) rather than sandy. This is due to the ever-shifting channel of the River Kent. However, sand or no sand, if you happen to be on the prom when a high tide is flowing you will be treated to the sight of the water edging over the grass to the sea wall. If it's stormy as well you may also be in danger of getting wet feet. The shore is a beautiful place to look at but treacherous underfoot with quicksands, racing tides and strong currents – the site of the cockle pickers tragedy a few years ago. Walking on the sands is not recommended without the official Queen's Guide to the Sands. However, if you fancy doing something different you can cross the bay from Arnside with the Guide on one of his hosted walks which take place, weather and tides permitting, throughout the summer.

Just past the station is the duck pond in the ornamental gardens. Beyond this you start to walk uphill again, and you come to the Victoria Hall, which is where much

of the social life of Grange takes place – it is home to the Operatic, Dramatic and Lecture Societies, and numerous other clubs and organisations use its facilities for concerts, exhibitions, craft and antique fairs, film nights, bingo and exercise classes. Clubs and societies abound in Grange and the surrounding area. A quick look in the free monthly newspaper, *The Grange Now*, confirms this. In fact, *The Grange Now* is really the only information source necessary to answer most of the questions posed in the Information Centre.

We now head for home again, this time via the main road. We must however make one small detour in Lindale as I have to go and see our seven sheep. I do this on the return journey from Grange because I dislike walking round covered in bits of hay and mud. We return to our village up a steep hill with the trees forming an



Lindsay's sheep

archway overhead. We may also have to stop and shoo a wandering lamb back into its field. I risk meeting another car along here and having to reverse a considerable distance because at the top of the hill you are once again presented with a magnificent view of the Lake District Mountains.

Three young children and a small flock of sheep made going out to work both extremely difficult and economically unsound.

I realise that I have said nothing about my life as an indexer so far. I decided to go into indexing because having three young children and a small flock of sheep made going out to work both extremely difficult and economically unsound. Indexing could be done anywhere and at any time and allowed me to do something I felt I was reasonably good at, *and* it was sitting down. The children are now grown up so I do some volunteering, including working in the Information Centre a few hours a week, so that indexing is still what I do in my spare time. I've written this assuming that our travels are taken on a fine day. Quite often it's very wet and you can't see anything . . .

When *Oliver Twist* utters the revolutionary demand "Please, sir, I want some more", it is evident that his creator not only deploys the line as a dramatic high point but also invests it with his tacit approval. Oliver, though selected by the casting of lots rather than volunteering to put himself in danger, is the agent of necessary rebellion for, as is clearly in Dickens' mind, no change in the vicious deployment of Victorian poverty as a class weapon can be effected without the victims rising up.

The conviction of the overfed members of the workhouse board that Oliver will in due course end his days by being "hung" [*sic*] is roundly confounded in the denouement, and so Dickens' case is carried. Though the novelist may certainly be accused of indulging his delight in the many larger-than-life characters with which he decorates Oliver's journey to salvation, that salvation is never in doubt and is only achieved because Oliver has the gumption to reach for it.

Can we learn something from this? As the SI's new recommended rates kick in, the old debate about whether we hold ourselves too dear has been aired again. An experienced member recently accounted these rates as "cloud cuckoo land". And indeed the anecdotal evidence points to the fees generally offered and the bids generally accepted going in the opposite direction to the rates recommended.

What should be our response to falling rates? Should we meekly accept that publishers' margins are being squeezed and that those publishers are more likely to seek savings in the fees they pay to vulnerable freelancers than in the dividends they pay to voting shareholders? Should we rather seek a strategy for protecting each other (and thereby the whole profession) against a tendency that will inevitably induce some indexers to leave the profession and deter others from joining it? Or should we accept that the effects of austerity will take many years yet to cease from impacting on the



most vulnerable workers? Should we recognise that living, discriminating experts will increasingly be seen as an unaffordable luxury when automatic searching, frustrating though it might be, will be gradually accepted by book-buyers when there is no longer a subtle and specific alternative?

Last autumn, your correspondent was offered a rate of \$3.95 per 1,000 words (not £, be it noted) for a demanding job (an elusive academic text). Should he have accepted? Reader, he did not. Presumably another indexer did so. You will all have your own views as to the respective integrity and realism of these two indexers.

Are we pricing ourselves out of work? The new recommended rate for an hour's indexing is £25.90. That compares with the National Living Wage that will rise in April to £8.21 per hour. Is our expertise worth three times that of an unskilled manual worker aged over 24? Perhaps it is not.

What would the realists advise? Should we be saying to our editors "Please, madam, I am happy to make do with less"? Should we just knuckle down and accept a rate below half that calculated by our executive board to be a fair and reasonable valuation of our expertise and time?

Should the recommended rates themselves be adjusted downwards? Are rates being established in practice by those who accept reduced fees, thereby undercutting those who are trying to dig in their heels over sliding fees?

A veteran member of decided views advocates simplifying the indexes we offer in response to reduced fees. "They don't deserve our quality products when paying these rates," he writes. Your correspondent is not alone in observing that this would sit uncomfortably. There is the matter of pride in one's work. It would offend many a sensibility to lower the standards we have painstakingly built up merely as a rationale for taking a reduced rate. When deep in a job, must we remind ourselves that we shouldn't be working too diligently? Isn't that selling the pass?

Perhaps the indexer who took on the job at \$3.95 per 1,000 words was someone outside the SI. Or perhaps it was a neophyte, grateful for an early commission that actually paid folding money. Unless they have established relationships with known freelancers, editors and authors don't generally know who is who among those available. There is no way for the client to guess that the potential service provider is a reliable **▷ p11**

p 10 ↻ old hand or a nervous newbie, unless the supplier discloses this information. Accepting a low rate is not such a disclosure. Perhaps the solution lies here.

If the SI were to formalise and make mandatory the charges to customers, precluding publishers from shopping around for the cheapest option, the erosion of fees might be halted. The Society could fix lower rates for newly designated 'probationers', those accepting their first professional commissions – six such,

perhaps, or ten – and the clients would understand that their wish to pay less could only be met by their hiring less experienced (or indeed unqualified) indexers. Everyone else would be available at the fixed rate, so the customers' discrimination would only involve a preference for a known indexer or one whose declared speciality chimed with the project. Of course, this is not how professions are generally regulated. To tell publishers that they only may have SI services if they pay a set rate

would be a high-risk strategy. But some of us feel that this is a crisis and that something radical needs to be done.

In the spirit of hope, **Pam Scholefield's** charming new year greeting is offered to all: "May you get all the work you want, for the fee you deserve, and may everything arrive when it is supposed to. Am I forgetting anything?"

The Locator

Practical & Technical

New online workshop for eBook indexing

eBooks have proved themselves to be an enduring feature in publishing. While not driving out the printed book, as many thought they might, they have become an established part of the book market, often being produced alongside printed editions or enabling self-publishing authors to produce and market their books with ease. This of course has implications for indexing – indexes linked to page numbers don't really work in eBooks. This has led some publishers to abandon the index in the eBook version, but others have embraced

technology and new ways of working to create indexes with links to the text. This requires that indexers also embrace new working practices.

Have you been wondering about getting into eBook and embedded indexing, or worrying that you might have to? Perhaps you are a new indexer who welcomes the challenge and opportunity that eBook indexing presents but are unsure how to get to grips with it all. Are you generally experienced, but apprehensive about what might be involved and whether you have the technical ability to

take it on? Does it all seem a bit of an unfathomable enigma? Does the talk of EPUB and XML frankly rather terrify you? If the answer to any of these questions is 'Yes' then the new 'Active Indexing: creating indexes for eBooks' workshop is for you.

The workshop, developed out of a 2018 conference presentation at Lancaster, gives an informative overview and useful insights into the world of eBook indexing. It covers understanding of what an eBook is and how it is made up, how active links work and how entries need to be

embedded for them to be effective. To provide some familiarity with the relevant software packages, there are short step-by-step demonstrations of a range of embedded indexing techniques, which provide a basic level of understanding of the interfaces and how index entries are created. The workshop also explains in a simple way what XML actually is and why it underpins most current publishing processes. Issues in the conversion of working files to eBook



↻ **p12**

p11 ↻ and how best to publish texts with active indexes on Amazon are explored and the workshop concludes with diagrammatic examples of how various indexing scenarios fit into publisher workflows. The workshop includes some exercises that come with answers to enhance your understanding, and a tutor is available to answer further questions.

If you are thinking of getting into eBook and embedded indexing, or have taken the 'EI in MS Word' workshop and want to understand more, this is an excellent introduction to the wider world of eBook indexing, and should give you confidence to experiment with software, take on commissions and talk to clients. Clients themselves are often unsure of the options or what process is

required, so even if you don't want to get into e-indexing yourself, a little knowledge and understanding will enable you to give your client the right advice.

More information, including a detailed list of contents, can be found [here](#).

Jan Worrall
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CINDEX™ – A New Year's Resolution

According to results from a Google search on New Year's resolutions, "65% of us make them". And 12 January apparently is the day most people ditch them.

I am hopeful that the following resolution will last much, much longer and save you considerable time, annoyance and frustration should the worst happen. This is the year to resolve to regularly back up your Cindex data – at the end of your daily indexing session, and even before you step away from your desk for a few minutes. We hear sad tales (elderly machines and cats' paws seem to figure largely in these) and we, in turn, are sad when we cannot retrieve data from the damaged file. So, what are your options?

Daily end-of-session backup

Use the File Menu//Save As (Windows) or Save To (Mac) and select the 'XML Records' file format. This produces a file with an *ixml* extension. The resulting file is small since it only contains your entered data (no formatting is included), but it

can be quickly and directly opened as needed. However, you will have to check and reset your document and preferences settings as necessary, should you ever need to open this file.

You can also Save a Copy from the File Menu (Save Backup Copy on PCs). This makes an exact copy (warts and all) of your index-in-progress. The file will have the same extension as your working index file (*ucdx* in Cindex versions 3 and 4) and with Version 4 will have the word 'Copy' added to its original name (in version 3 on the PC you will need to be careful to give it a name that distinguishes it from your working copy).

Where should one store these files? Ideally, they should be stored on devices away from your machine: thumb drives or external hard drives are two of the most commonly used devices. If using a thumb drive, *do not* save directly to it from Cindex, but rather write (save) the file to your desktop or indexing folder and then copy or drag it to the mounted device. *Do* remember to 'eject' your device correctly when this manoeuvre is completed. If the worst happens and you need to use an index file backed up on a thumb drive or external drive, be sure to copy that file back to your computer. *Do not* open a file directly on the thumb drive or external drive.

Temporary backup before stepping away from your desk

The same procedures as above apply here, although you may find the first two options sufficient.

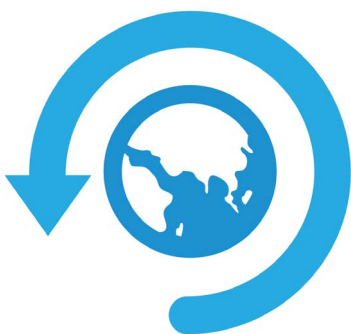
Backing up when away from your office

The above procedures also apply, but if you really want to travel light (instead of lugging around an external drive) you can send the *ixml* file and/or index copy to a friend/colleague via email. Some indexers send these files to themselves, since they are retrievable from the email provider.

How Cindex can help preserve the integrity of your data

Cindex will automatically save the index to disk according to a time interval you can set in preferences. This is *not* a substitute for backing up, but rather a time when Cindex takes material that is held in memory – and why Cindex works so speedily – and deposits it on the hard drive.

Cindex also has a File Menu//Revert to Saved feature. Should you have made a complete mess, for example, of a text substitution (Replace) with or without the use of a Pattern, Boolean operators etc, you can select the Revert to Saved feature to restore the index to its last-saved iteration on the hard drive. This feature has been offered since 2012 when Cindex v.3 was released, and here is how it came about: I had been making finishing touches to a multi-year (fifty to be precise), multi-indexer, cumulative, historical journal project in v.2 of the program, when I did something stupid. I tried to emulate some distinctive formatting (using a pattern substitution) used in the preceding cumulation completed in the early 1960s. The file contained 144,000 records ↻ **p13**



31 March is World Backup Day

p12 ↻ and I had backed up the file several hours earlier. I was confident I knew exactly what I was doing and had thus not tested the syntax, or results, of the substitution in a dummy file. Big mistake. I managed to strip the first letter of every single subheading in the index. There was, at the time, no Revert to Saved function. Obviously, I was able to reconstitute the index from the much earlier backup file, but because, in my final index polishing, I had been flitting around the index in no logical order, I had to try and recall which entries I had attended to. It all worked out, but for a couple of highly-charged moments I thought I

would have to go through the index line-by-line to restore the subheads.

It could have been worse, but it was a lesson well learned – and never forgotten. This is why, for those of you who have attended my Cindex sessions, I always now recommend “forcing a save” – Control S (Windows) or Command S (Mac) – or making a backup file, just before you undertake a substitution you may come to regret. At least now you can revert to the just-saved index or backup file if everything goes sideways.

Regardless of the software you use – *keep backing up*. It may sometimes seem tedious or a tad redun-

dant, but we are all one calamity (machine meltdown or human error) away from a missed deadline, and the extra work involved.

I wish everyone a happy and prosperous new year. And long may your backup resolution last.

Frances S. Lennie
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Local Groups

East Midlands

Five members of the East Midlands Group met at the Phoenix Arts Centre Café in Leicester on Tuesday 22 October. There was much



The Phoenix Arts Centre, Leicester

discussion of a general nature before we turned to deal with some specific indexing issues. I set two of them out so that they may be of assistance generally. The first concerns the use of the cross-referencing terms “*see*” or “*see also*”. It is normal practice to present them in italics where the preceding and following words are in Roman, but an index may look more presentable if Roman is used where the preceding and following words are both in italics. The second issue related to the cumbersome problem that arises when a consider-

able number of notes need indexing, and they are contained at the end of a book. All agreed that it is much better to create a separate PDF file to deal with these, and for this purpose PDFfill is a most useful tool and can be downloaded free from the internet. It allows users to alter existing PDFs or create new documents from scratch.

Members agreed that we would hold another meeting in Leicester at the same place round about March and dates would be discussed nearer the time.

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London

Five of us decided to revisit our favourite pub, Ye Olde Watling in the

City of London, for an early-evening Christmas meal this year. We chose a mixture of dishes from their Christmas menu along with traditional crackers and Christmas hats. The dining room upstairs has a great atmosphere with old oak beams and friendly staff.

Rohan Bolton
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North West

Five of us met at Dutton's near Chester Cathedral on Saturday 14 December. Previous pre-Christmas meets have been in Manchester and Liverpool, so it was nice to visit another lovely city in our region. We were a mixture of student indexers and those with several years' experience. We chatted about a ↻ **p14**



London Groups members Rohan Bolton, Beverley Winkler, Barry Campbell, Cath Topliff and Christine Shuttleworth get in the Christmas spirit at Ye Olde Watling

p13 ➡ few indexing topics including embedded indexing, and everyone felt that it was good to have a further catch-up. Several of our regular attendees are from counties on the peripheries of the north west, and Ironbridge was suggested as a possible next location to meet. I hope this isn't stepping on another group's toes. If this sounds of interest, please email.

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Dutton's, Chester: meeting place of the North West group

Scottish

Eight members of the Scottish group met in Glasgow in early November, and were welcomed to the Moving Image Archive by Sheena MacDougall, Learning and Outreach Officer. Sheena gave us a tour of their facility, which includes a Discovery Area exploring the history of cinematography and cine-going in Scotland, as well as interactive touch screens displaying themed footage. The Archive is part of the National Library of Scotland and it acquires, preserves and stores footage by and about the people of Scotland, alongside an ambitious programme that aims to have one third of the collection digitised by 2025. Curators Ann Cameron and Liam Paterson showed us the catalogue and discussed the challenges of accurately cataloguing material which has often been stored in family homes for many years. The Moving Image Archive follows guidance by the International Federation of Film Archives and in-house uses the *Sears List of Subject Headings*.

Following this visit we had lunch at a neighbouring tapas restaurant, where the discussion covered indexing software, embedded indexing and a chat about the 2019 conference where those who had been able to attend shared their experiences with those who had not.

The next Scottish group meeting will be in Edinburgh in spring 2020. Please email if you would like to be kept informed and have not yet joined the mailing list.

Fiona Firth
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Sussex

Five members of the Sussex group met in November in Café Rouge, Haywards Heath, for a peer review session. The text we chose was a short booklet, *Manage Your Pain* by Liz Macleod ([available online](#)), recommended by one of the other local groups. This was a very fruitful text for discussion of indexing. We evaluated the likely readership and users and whether they would expect to see the metatopic within the index, the usefulness of including both lay and medical terminology, and whether the latter would add to the text's credibility among health professionals; and we discussed dealing with words that have ambiguous meanings within the text. We also considered the usefulness of indexing metaphors or examples that don't, in themselves, relate to the metatopic but might help make information

accessible. Finally, we had an interesting discussion about using more discursive, specific headings like "asking for help" to make the index more user-friendly, similar to the ways that search engines will now respond to voice-activated searches. The meeting closed with lunch. Our next meeting will be in Spring and we hope to visit the Keep, the Brighton-based home of the Mass Observation and local authority Record Office archives.

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Three Choirs

We went to Nature in Art near Gloucester in November for our annual planning meeting. Over coffee we set the meetings, but some of the details will still need to be firmed up over the year. ➡ **p15**

- 30 January will be a session on subheadings held in the



The Café Rouge in Haywards Heath hosted the Sussex group's November meeting



Seasonal Blue Tit: Paul Sawyer's award-winning entry for the British Wildlife Photography Awards

p14 ➡ library at Charlton Kings near Cheltenham

- the March meeting will be at Snowhill in Gloucestershire. The exact date will be set in due course but it will be later in the month when it reopens for the season
- the May meeting has two possibilities so we are waiting further developments. Again this will be later in the month
- the July meeting will be at Tintern Abbey – a little out of our area but well worth the journey. Fingers crossed for good weather. Again, more details later
- back to November again for the planning session for 2021. We will be going to Batsford Arboretum on 18 November, hoping there will still be some leaves on the trees

Of course if anyone outside of the group wishes to come on any of the above visits, please contact me.

After our planning meeting, we visited the gallery to see the exhibit for the 2019 British Wildlife Photography Awards. There were some

stunning photographs to see there. This is the world's first gallery and museum totally dedicated to nature and you will find art in any media from many different cultures and periods. After viewing the gallery, we had lunch in their café before heading home. We were fortunate with the weather ... again ...

*Pam Scholefield
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West Anglia

Five of us met at the Abbot's Kitchen Café, St. Albans Cathedral at 12:00 on 24 October. There were two apologies for absence. Since the last time we came to this venue, the café and gift shop area has been completely refurbished, and was a great improvement: lovely surroundings and good food.

After the usual catch-up with each other (recent jobs, rates of pay), talk turned to the conference at Queen Mary College in East London. **Nicola King** and **Beverley Winkler** both attended and agreed that the conference had gone very well, but that the food had been disappointing "student canteen level". Ideas

were being floated for next year's conference, and Birmingham looks to be the favourite. It's a central venue with good train links. For the following year, Germany is being considered.

We discussed embedded indexing and specifically Cambridge University Press. Nicola and **Paula Clarke Bain** will have been there by the time you read this to talk about indexing, and certainly two of us, **Jane Henley** and Beverley, have done quite a bit of work for CUP. There have been postings on Sldeline recently about their rates of pay, and whether it is more profitable to work for authors directly rather than through the editors. Their rates are low, but better than rates offered by Newgen (for example) and, as prolific publishers, they always have plenty of books to be indexed.

Our next meeting will be the post-Christmas lunch. This will be at the Higgins Art Gallery in Bedford on Tuesday 14 January.

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[Apologies for misspelling Malcolm's name in the October issue – ed]*

Yorkshire

Four of us met on Saturday 12 October at the Create Café in Wakefield to discuss 'Indexing the Metatopic', led by our amply prepared group coordinator, **Mel Gee**. We discussed what we meant by a metatopic, either the simple topic of the book, probably found in its title, or a complexity when there may be multiple topics in a single text. Different aspects of the discussion were split into categories in order to prioritise the most knotty and immediate problems, although the small number of attendees meant that we worked our way through most of the subjects. Of particular interest were the respective expectations of the author and the reader, and appropriate subheadings under the metatopic and how to word them, especially in multi-author works where different terms may have been used. How do we add value and create new entry points into the text without hiding information too far under a main heading? How do we decipher passing mentions? What about children's books? We came to the conclusion that many books have similar metatopic considerations but biographies are the exception to everything.

As we had a trainee attending, the conversation expanded to general approaches to work, tips for finding work and trading anecdotes. We continued over lunch with the importance of local group meetings and conference. Who else will talk to an indexer about metatopics but another indexer?

Our Christmas meeting and AGM was held at the Assembly Rooms in York. Eight people turned out (including **Paul Machen** whisked away from the SI Office for a few hours) to plan future meetings, discuss events and eat, drink and be merry. We picked dates and destinations for the next year's meetings, rotated in order to be convenient to as many people as possible, and discussed topics and new possible venues for the future. The usual pattern was followed of one peer review, one index-related discussion and one social, plus Christmas and leaving space for Conference attendance. Prompted by a post by **Ann Hudson** on Sideline, we hoped that it would be possible to investigate Shibden Hall, its tenant Anne Lister, and the index to her diaries, although this may take some planning by our Halifax-adjacent members.

Business being concluded, we commenced with a party game brought to us by our Group coordinator Mel, who had asked us ahead of time to provide facts and 'fake news' about ourselves on slips of paper to be held and exchanged like a pack of cards. Given that we were a table of introverts, this could have gone horribly wrong, but we had an excellent time guessing which facts were correct. We now know which of our members have earned allotment prizes and passed music grades, and that none of us has been mistaken for the Duchess of Sutherland. This sparked conversation for the rest of our time together as we ate our lunch and then drifted off to pick up children or browse the Christmas Market.

Our next meeting will be a peer review in Wakefield on Saturday 14 March.

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