

Slidelights

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

Editorial

The typical indexer has been a model citizen during the ups and downs of the pandemic. Working from home long before we'd heard of Covid-19, she is well used to self-sufficiency. Her fellow indexers are already an online support group who understand her problems instinctively and rally with a will. Her work patterns may have been disrupted, but by and large she has been able to keep earning – just as well, as she hardly qualifies for income support. She is unlikely to find herself among those who will not forgo regular trips to the match, the beach, the rave, the pictures or the pub, and if the church or the choir have become off-limits, substitute contact has been contrived via the miracles of technology. Her arrangements may have been more fraught if she has children at home or family members needing care, but in these matters she finds herself experiencing a little of what is only a part of the much more extensive ordeal that millions have been enduring. Imagine living in a southern-hemisphere village with no income, a huge extended family, and little or no health care. Relatively, she has had it easy.

Perhaps then we should resist the temptation to elbow our way up the vaccination queue, even if we fall into supposed “at risk” groupings. After all, although people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties account for three-fifths of Covid-related deaths, they are not prioritised for vaccination. It's also reasonable to resist the unquestioning enthusiasm of politicians and the media over this trumpeted panacea. Given that the pandemic's management has been characterised by failed apps and systems, instant u-turns, and vainglorious promises of “world-beating” responses, we might take more flag-waving and Micawberism with a sack of salt. The critic Misha Donat described hope as “the most terrible of all tortures”.

To favour a cautious view of the vaccine's promise on social media is to court being denounced as a vaccine-denier, a danger to one's fellows, a Luddite, a traitor, a fascist or a wet blanket. But the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine, we are told, is effective only for 70% of cases. How will one know if one is among the one in four whose jab has been in vain? Nobody knows the efficacy of these vaccines over twelve months because they haven't existed that long. The instinct to wait a little longer on the jab's reputation is permissible.



JANUARY 2021

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Marin Alsop (see p11)

Presidential Musings



“Beans, flageolet”. Never underestimate, I thought to myself earlier this week, the number of situations in which an index will come to be handy. Here we are, post-Christmas, heading back into full lockdown (I write this just moments after our tousle-haired leader announced he was slamming us back into the jug for the foreseeable). The new strain of the virus is rampaging through the population, the optimism of late summer has vanished – the sedge, so to speak, has withered from the lake, and no birds sing. And now I find myself chief cook, playmate and educator to three under-twelves in addition to the day job. So as the delivery slots dry up, and with “pop-ping to the shops” no longer the breeze it once was, I’m rifling the larder for forgotten ingredients.

And goodness, it makes you appreciate the undersung work of those specialists in our fraternity who work on cookbooks. I have a few of the latter, and my word it makes a difference when, faced as I was just now with an ancient bag of dried green pulses, I was able to rifle my library for something to cook with them. The well-made index to a cookbook is, these days, one of the major quality-of-life improvements for me. It’s so helpful to be able to search not only by dish but by ingredient; and the best of them are navigable by type of ingredient as well as type of dish. The odd one is even forgiving when we seek cilantro or garbanzo beans or eggplant rather than coriander, chickpeas or aubergine.

To make the index for a cookbook you need, I fancy, to think like a cook. And in doing so, you help home cooks like me to think more like caterers. Good indexes are helping many like me to make thrifty and delicious use of old ingredients, to prevent waste, and to keep the home front in the war on Covid well fed and cheerful. Here’s to you.


Sam Leith

Society News

Executive Board Report

The Executive Board met on 4 November.

EB members confirmed the arrangements for the AGM, including testing out the Zoom practicalities, and reviewed the third quarter

accounts, which remained in a healthy position. For that reason, no increase would be proposed for 2021 membership fees at the AGM. The Office Manager’s remuneration was discussed and agreed.  p3

CONGRATULATIONS TO

New Accredited Indexer – MSocInd
Caroline Hawthorne – East Boldon, Tyne and Wear

New Advanced Members – MSocInd(Adv)
Susan Goodman – Gunnislake, Cornwall
Helen Taylor – Stonehouse, Gloucestershire

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

April 2021 *Sidelights*

Copy deadline

Tuesday 6 April

(for electronic distribution mid-April)

p2 ↻ A training report was also received and EB noted current student progress and that the annual markers' meeting had taken place via Zoom this year.

The main topic of discussion was the new Fellowship model, present-

ed by **Jan Worrall**. EB approved the model for implementation and particularly welcomed the inclusion of peer review activities in the points-based CPD table. A number of points of clarification were noted.

It was agreed that discussion of the approved model would take place during the Society Matters meeting after the AGM.

Tanya Izzard, Minutes Secretary
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Behind the Chair

Winter in Tier 4 Covid restrictions hasn't been much to write home about, even less than I predicted in the October newsletter. No brass bands at Christmas and no church bells at all. No pubs for New Year. Just us and the cats and the rain. Some good bird-watching spots yesterday, 2 January: my first Great Egret and a flock of redwings, another of lapwings and a small bunch of goldfinches, all visible from a footpath across a farm within walking distance of our house.

Reading and books have formed a significant part of many people's winter lockdown. The role of indexers in producing those books may have been brought to the fore for some during the last few months. The life of SI member **Douglas Matthews** was celebrated in November by many outside of the indexing community, which showed how much good indexing is appreciated by authors [see obituary on p4]. The newspapers are already full of the forthcoming titles for 2021. New titles include a "definitive" biography, by Paula Byrne, of Barbara Pym, indexer and author of stories with characters who are indexers. Let's hope it includes something worth reading about her indexing work and how she used that to create her characters.

The UK census takes place on 21 March this year. It is an opportunity



Barbara Pym

for us to record our work as indexers. As my research into indexers in the historic census returns shows [see *The Indexer* vol. 38, No. 4], there are some very interesting people recorded in the census returns whose work has yet to be fully appreciated. For the benefit of future historians of indexing, please make sure you include your indexing work in your census return. It will be done online this time, but hopefully will include fields where people can describe what they do. There are also employment opportunities for those who like to mix up indexing with other work; check online at <https://www.censusjobs.co.uk/search-for-a-job/> for more information.

The practice of indexing is also highlighted to a wider community by the new draft US standard. The draft NISO Z39.4 standard is available at <https://www.niso.org/standards-committees/criteria-indexes>. I would encourage all members to take a look at this document and consider it in the context of their own indexing practice. If you have any comments, please do send them to me chair@indexers.org.uk before the end of January. It is sometimes the case that where one standards body updates a standard, the international community follows.

Nicola King

Website and Social Media

As we start the new year, here is a review of where site visitors have come from when first accessing the site during 2020. As is normal for any site, the majority comes from either searches or direct links [Table 1 on the next page]. Although the share from other sites may seem small, it is these links that ensure that we achieve high

rankings in search results. As well as those in the table, the hits from individual indexers' own websites add to the overall total.

Table 2 shows the first landing page for visitors before they explore other areas of the site. The main group of visitors are our own members, but we can see ↻ **p4**

p3 ➡ that after the member areas, the directory and training course are the most visited sections. As

Referrer site	Visitors	% Share
Search engines	7232	42.53
Direct link: bookmark, email, etc.	6431	45.18
Twitter	325	1.91
Facebook	275	1.62
nationalcareers.service.gov.uk	257	1.51
Wikipedia	230	1.35
ciep.uk (formerly sfep.org.uk)	100	0.59
anzi.org	96	0.56
afepi-ireland.com	57	0.33
linkedin.com	43	0.25
hayfestival.com	29	0.17
indexers.ca	22	0.13
societyofauthors.org	20	0.12

Table 1: How visitors have arrived at the SI website

requested in the last issue of *Sidelights*, we are still looking for a volunteer to be involved with running the social media. So if you are a keen Tweeter, please get in touch via publicity@indexers.org.uk

Ruth Ellis
website@indexers.org.uk

Page	Views	% Share
Forums home page and topics page	26276	16.47
Home	15848	9.93
Log In	8615	5.40
Directory of Professional Indexers	8213	5.15
Indexing fees	3415	2.14
Training course overview/features	2994	1.88
Training course	2723	1.71
A career in indexing	2617	1.64
Training course prices and ordering	1435	0.90
About indexing	779	0.49

Table 2: Pages visited on the site

Obituary: Douglas Matthews

Douglas Matthews, who died in Lewes on 7 November at the age of 93 (having recently completed an index on the first Anglo-Afghan war), was well known in the literary world, meriting obituaries in three national newspapers (*The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian*) and a flurry of accolades on social media from leading writers. All three obituaries focused on his indexing career, including quotes from Douglas himself about the indexing process, how much he enjoyed it, the interpretive role of the indexer and the need for objectivity. The *Telegraph* obituary writer obviously had a good understanding of indexing, reminding readers that “a good index is . . . analytic, conceptual and evaluative”.

Douglas had played an important role in raising the profile of the indexing profession during his life, and through these obituaries continued to do so after his death. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (RSL) in 1999, an honour rarely conferred on non-authors but one that recognised his contribution to many important books and his good standing with

their authors. In 2008, he received the RSL’s Benson Medal, which is “often awarded to those who are not writers, but who have done conspicuous service to literature” (visit the [Benson Medal web page](#) for a list of the illustrious company he found himself in). Five years later, he was made an MBE in the 2013 New Year’s

Honours List as “Literary Indexer: for services to Literature”.

During his career, he built up long-term relationships with several writers, regarding it as a privilege to be part of the team, especially for large projects, such as the twelve-volume *Letters of Charles Dickens* (published by OUP ➡ **p5**)

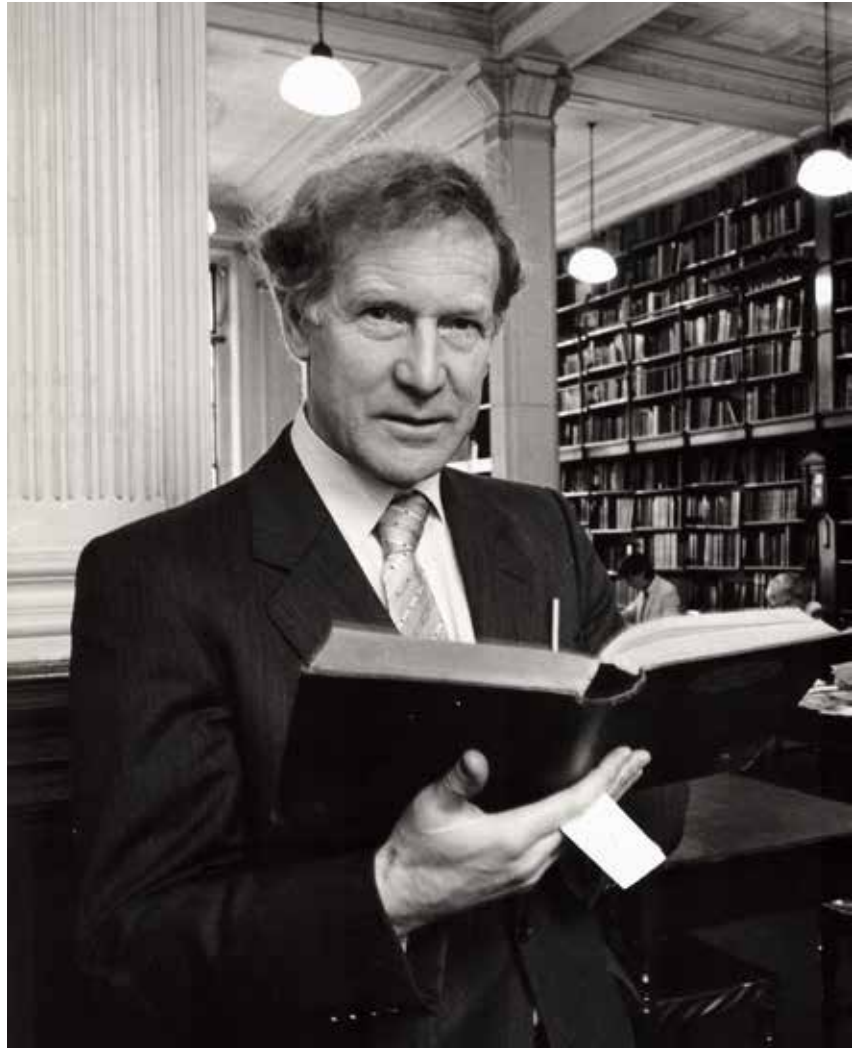


Shirley May's painting of the cliffs at Lewes, Douglas's home for over 50 years.

p4 ↻ between 1965 and 2002) and the eight-volume *Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson* (Yale University Press). Claire Tomalin described him as “my old friend” in the acknowledgements to her 2011 *Charles Dickens: a Life*. And Antonia Fraser, Philip Ziegler, Valerie Grove and Jeremy Paxman were among many other well-known writers who expressed their thanks and appreciation, not just for his indexing expertise but also his eagle-eyed ability to spot errors and inconsistencies, often saving them from embarrassment. Several referred to him as a prince, or even a king among indexers, variously praising his dexterity, his diligence, his enthusiasm, his expertise, his imagination and his omniscience.

It was through his prominence in the literary world that he took to the airwaves in 1999, helping to raise the profile of the profession among Radio 4 listeners. His account of the experience was published in the October 1999 issue of *The Indexer* (Vol. 21, no. 4). His involvement in the literary world was also demonstrated in his role as a trustee (and for ten years a registrar) of the Royal Literary Fund (a charity supporting authors in financial difficulties) and membership of his local Lewes Literary Society and the Society of Sussex Authors. His letters to **Hazel Bell** reveal a man on easy terms with writers and scholars. They also demonstrate his sense of humour and his way with words, a skill evident in his indexes, which **Christopher Phipps** described in the [October 2017 *Slide-lights*](#) as “exemplars of concision, efficacy and wit”.

Like many of us, Douglas had come to indexing via librarianship. Born on 23 August 1927 in Middlesbrough, North Yorkshire, he was educated at Acklam Hall School and then Durham University, where he read Geography. It was an inspirational talk by the university librarian that set him on the path towards an indexing career; abandoning thoughts of going into teaching, he took the postgraduate librarianship course at North-Western Polytechnic in London (now part of London Met-



Douglas Matthews pictured in the London Library: “greeting and chatting with the regulars, always remembering their current projects and interests, and frequently darting off to the stacks to fetch them things they were having trouble locating, or more often, things they didn’t even realise existed”.

ropolitan University). His first post (1952–62) was in the library of the India Office, cataloguing and subject indexing, followed by three years at the Home Office Library. In 1965 he moved to the London Library as Deputy Librarian, becoming Librarian in 1980, a post he held until his retirement in 1993.

Many indexers prepare their first index for a friend or colleague, and this was also the case for Douglas. It was during his sabbatical at Stockholm’s Royal Library (1956–7) that a history professor needed a native English speaker to index a book on power politics before the First World War. In correspondence with Hazel Bell for her ‘Index makers of today’ series in the October 1997 issue of *The Indexer* (vol. 20, no. 3), Douglas

even suggested it might have been one of his best indexes, as it was produced under ideal conditions with plenty of time and generous payment. Can any other indexers look back on their early efforts with similar pride?

That index duly led to further commissions and a career that was to last for over 60 years. He found the most satisfying aspect of the job of librarian was acting as an intermediary between the library resources and their users, mirroring the way an indexer acts as an intermediary between a text and its readers. The London Library, an institution frequented by many writers, was an ideal base from which to build up professional relationships (and friendships) ↻ p6

p5 and develop an indexing career. Christopher Phipps, who overlapped with Douglas at the Library in the early 1990s, remembers "his frequent presence in the main Issue Hall, greeting and chatting with the regulars, always remembering their current projects and interests, and frequently darting off to the stacks to fetch them things they were having trouble locating, or more often, things they didn't even realise existed".

In 2004, the SI Sussex Group persuaded Douglas to come and speak about his life as an indexer and show them some of the many books he had worked on, including a scholarly volume on the Domesday Book retailing at £5000. They found him to be a fascinating and entertaining speaker. He explained how during his career at the London Library he used to index on the train from Lewes to London using slips of paper and juggling the proofs on his knees. To indexers used to computerised methods, this sounded very precarious, but only one fellow passenger ever asked what he was doing. It was in the 1990s that he moved into the digital age, abandoning cards and slips of paper in favour of Macrex, using the PC presented to him on his retirement. He also recounted the nightmare experience of accidentally abandoning an almost-completed large index in a carrier bag in a lay-by on a family holiday – luckily it was retrieved the next day after a very sleepless night. And in his self-deprecating style, he mentioned the time he could not avoid including himself in an index, despite the reference in James Lees-Milne's diaries relating to a conversation with Kenneth Rose in which the latter had apparently said "I think Douglas Matthews is the most overrated indexer". (This concerned a dispute with Rose about an index entry in a biography of George V).

Douglas had already been indexing for over 35 years when he joined the Society of Indexers in 1994, after retiring from the London Library. He now embarked on a second career as a full-time freelance indexer, at times finding himself "intolerably busy",

confessing to Hazel Bell in a letter in 1999 that "hysteria has taken over from panic". But he also appreciated

He used to index on the train from Lewes to London using slips of paper and juggling the proofs on his knees. . . . only one fellow passenger ever asked what he was doing.

the luxury of being able to turn work down without suffering in any way. Working 30 or more hours a week as an indexer was not from necessity (though he admitted that it helped to "put jam on the pension"). His sheer enjoyment was obvious both from his articles and from the aforementioned radio programme, and he regarded indexing as an education in itself, allowing him to immerse himself in books he would never otherwise have read. Although best known for his indexes to multi-volume works and major biographies, he covered a wide range of subjects and genres, including scientific material that he, as a layman, could understand.

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Many SI members knew him to be a distinguished indexer through, for example, his articles in *The Indexer*, and Hazel Bell's account of his career in her *From Flock Beds to Professionalism*. But he was rarely seen at conferences, exceptions being Cambridge in 2000, when he spoke about indexing letters (see the April 2001 issue of *The Indexer*, vol. 22, no.

3), and the 2012 Brighton conference. It was at Brighton that he and then SI president **John Sutherland** braved storm and tempest on their way to the station after the gala dinner. To this day, **Ingrid Lock** feels guilty about this; as far as we know, Douglas suffered no ill effects from getting soaked, but as Ingrid explained on the Sussex Group forum (18 November 2020), "poor John later succumbed to a horrible chill . . . funds should have stretched to getting them a taxi. Sadly I did not find out till later that they planned to walk".

Given the high regard in which his indexes were held, what seemed surprising to many in SI was that Douglas was never awarded the Wheatley Medal, although his index to Peter Ackroyd's 1990 biography of Dickens had been commended as being "lively, full of character, well organised . . . as distinctive as the book it so ably complements". This is not the place to revisit arguments about Wheatley judges apparently favouring legal, scientific or medical works, or bemoan publishers' disregard for good indexing and their failure to submit many worthwhile indexes. However, it was partly in response to this situation that in 2004 the Executive Board, at the urging of SI member **Geraldine Beare**, agreed that the Carey Award should be presented to Douglas as a "tireless promotor of good indexing" and "an inspiration to all who know him". Typical of his self-effacing personality, he insisted that there was no need to frame the certificate, thus averting a last-minute panic about the logistics of getting the certificate both signed and framed in time for the presentation. To misquote Churchill's quip about Attlee, Douglas Matthews was a modest man who had nothing to be modest about.

Ann Kingdom
ann.kingdom@googlemail.com

A further obituary will be published in the March issue of *The Indexer*.

Educating the editors

Ann Hudson's reminiscences of in-house workshop tutoring

SI members come from a variety of backgrounds and most of us have had one or more careers before discovering that indexing is the best job in the world. I was previously a teacher and adult education lecturer so, after joining SI, I fairly quickly became involved in indexing training. In 1997, I started leading workshops for SI members, as I have done ever since, though nowadays only once a year at conferences (when we can hold them); two of my workshops are also now available online (see <https://www.indexers.org.uk/training-development/workshops/online-workshops/>).

Since 1999, I have also run workshops on indexing for editors, visiting many publishing companies and some other organisations. The demand for in-house workshops has slowed over the years, largely due to publishers cutting costs and therefore their training budgets, so that only the larger companies now tend to have sufficient editors to justify paying for a day or half-day 'live' workshop. However, **Nicola King** and **Paula Clarke Bain** have run successful workshops for Newgen and CUP over the last year or two. And with online learning increasingly popular, I converted my standard 'Indexing for Editors' workshop into an online version (see *Sidelights*, April 2020), launched on National Indexing Day 2020: details at <https://www.indexers.org.uk/training-development/workshops/online-workshops/indexing-for-editors-online-workshop/>

The Covid crisis has put an end to in-house training opportunities for the time being, so it seems a good time to look back. In 1999, I took over from **Pat Booth** (author of *Indexing: the Manual of Good Practice*) with some trepidation as tutor for the Publishing Training Centre's one-day course on 'Indexing for Editors'. This attracted mainly editors from smaller companies and, by 2004 when the course was discontinued, I had been there nine times. From a personal point of view, I was not altogether sorry to stop: the workshop ran from 9:30 to 17:00, a long day to fill, and required an early start to get from my home in Chichester to the then headquarters of the PTC at Book House near Clapham Junction, building in slippage time to cope with the inevitable rail delays. A free lunch was provided at a pub round the corner, but this involved talking indexing all through lunchtime too, so I used to arrive home exhausted.


I was also working for ASLIB and, in January 2000, I led a day workshop for them at Legal Information Resources at Mytholmroyd in West Yorkshire. This involved a long train journey and an overnight stay in Hebden Bridge; I well remember struggling to get a signal on my fairly newly acquired mobile phone to order a taxi to Mytholmroyd. Nearer home, between 2001 and 2009, I led workshops for Psychology Press in Hove, Hodder Education and Taylor & Francis (twice) in London, Pearson Education in Harlow, and Oxford University Press. Some of these were full days and some half days; in

Oxford I led half-day workshops to two separate groups on the same day, which caused some problems as I had to remember which of my ad lib anecdotes I had told to which group. In more recent years I have visited Jessica Kingsley, DK and SAGE (the publishers, not the Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies), all in London.

In 2005, the Chartered Insurance Institute asked SI to organise a workshop to help their editors prepare indexes for their training materials. I spent a lot of time preparing for this, learning a fair amount about the insurance business as a result, but it was an enjoyable day and they invited me back in 2010. In 2009, I went to the Law Society to advise them on a project to index the minutes of their Council and various committees.

In 2012 and 2013, I led three full-day workshops for members of SfEP (now CIEP) in London and Glasgow; these catered both for editors commissioning and dealing with indexes, and for those considering indexing as an extra skill. Introductory sessions on indexing have also been regularly held at SfEP conferences, by myself (in Cambridge and Exeter) and by **Ann Kingdom** and Nicola King.

My workshops for editors begin by discussing the importance and qualities of a good index and the way indexers work, looking at some specific aspects of index construction and the role of indexing software. Then there are sections on how to commission an index and how to deal with the index when it arrives. Not many indexers get to meet editors, so it has been a privilege to act as a go-between, helping to make the indexer–editor relationship better for both parties. I've often passed relevant insights back to our membership.

I have always included some practical exercises, both to reinforce teaching points and to give people a break from sitting and listening. Several of these take the form of envelopes containing words or phrases on slips of paper, to be arranged in different ways, for instance in alphabetical order, word by word or letter by letter – often a source of wonder and puzzlement 



p7 ☞ as some editors have never realised the difference. Many of these exercises, and some new ones, feature in the online 'Indexing for Editors' workshop.

I have found most editors interested and engaged and keen to know more, and a frequent comment has been that the workshop was more enjoyable than expected; indexing is clearly perceived by many as being dry and boring. More negative experiences have been a roomful of resentful editors who had clearly been made to attend, though I did eventually get them to laugh at some of my jokes; and a group of five very quiet people whom it was impossible to kick-start into any form of discussion.

One never knows what sort of reception to expect when going into a company as a trainer. Sometimes there is a warm, friendly welcome, with cups of coffee and free lunches. On other occasions I have been pointed towards the lunch facilities and left to fend for myself. In one very large publishing company, I managed to find the cafeteria, but then had great difficulty getting back to the meeting room as all the doors en route could only be opened with a pass key. After asking various people to open doors and direct me, I did get there in the end, somewhat flustered and just in time to start the afternoon session.

Rooms for training vary greatly. One may get a room with tables and chairs and not much else, or a dedicated training suite with all facilities, but with chairs so large and comfortable that it is hard to fit in enough for people to have tables to work on and also to see the screen.



For my early workshops, I used an overhead projector and built up a large collection of transparent A4 sheets. After some experiences with venues struggling to locate what was now obsolete equipment, I progressed to PowerPoint, a great improvement. Technology can go wrong, though, even in the best organised companies; one has to be prepared to do without the PowerPoint display if necessary. I learned many years ago always to take along extra material to fill any unexpected gaps. Other strange and disconcerting things can happen: I turned up at the Publishing Training Centre on one occasion to find that a deaf participant had brought along someone to instantly transcribe everything I said; she was a fast typist but not everything came out quite right and I had to try not to look at the screen and get put off my stride.

One of my happiest experiences was with DK, whose offices are in Shell Mex House in the Strand, a striking 1930s Art Deco building, formerly a hotel. Former DK Director Valerie Buckingham contacted SI in 2016 for help with improving indexing throughout the company, and I gave six half-day workshops there over the next four years. I incorporated examples from indexes to their own books into my teaching materials, including books on *Star Wars* and *Frozen*, published by their Licensing division – a new area for me. The journey there was easy, and the adjacent Victoria Embankment Gardens were a pleasant place to sit if arriving early; the York Watergate, built c.1626 as a ceremonial landing stage for the long vanished York House, is a feature. On one occasion I was amazed to see a fox strolling nonchalantly through the



Waiting for a training session, in London's Victoria Embankment Gardens: LEFT York Watergate; RIGHT a fox among the narcissi.

There may be willing people to set things up exactly as one requires; or one may be shown the room and left to move all the furniture oneself. The temperature may range from freezing cold to asphyxiatingly hot; I always get warm when I am teaching, so I try to identify the temperature controls in order to tweak if necessary. Hodder Education's offices are many floors up in a tower block on the Euston Road; I found it hard there not to be distracted by the amazing views, though for the participants they were clearly too familiar to be interesting.

narcissi – right in the middle of London.

It has been a privilege over the last twenty years to introduce many editors to the mysteries of indexing, to help improve indexing done in-house, and to encourage a few editors to do our training course and take up indexing themselves. Hopefully, once things get back to normal and publishers get their staff back into their offices instead of working from home, in-house workshops will start up again.

Lyndsay Marshall took multiple detours

Like many indexers, I followed a career path that led from librarianship to indexing, but I took a few detours along the way. My first job was as a Saturday library assistant in Basingstoke Central Library while I was at sixth-form college in the early 1990s. I was thinking about applying for an undergraduate librarianship course, but was persuaded by my A-level teachers that I should study another academic subject first and come back to library studies as a postgraduate. I took a year out before I went to university and I worked as a receptionist in a recruitment consultancy. They mainly sourced permanent sales and marketing staff for the IT sector, but they also dealt with temporary secretarial roles, which meant I always had work in university holidays.

During my degree I spent a summer in the purchasing department of a computer distributor, and another summer audio-typing the answers to members' complaints at the Automobile Association. In 1996, I enrolled at King Alfred's College (now the University of Winchester) to study English and Contemporary Cultural Studies. I also volunteered as a scout leader and by the final year of my degree I was engaged to Graham, whom I'd met on a scout leaders' training course. I still wanted to be a librarian, so applied for a position as a SCONUL graduate trainee in the University of Surrey library in Guildford to gain the experience I would need to apply for a post-graduate course.

The following year I started an MA in Information Studies at the University of Brighton. We lived in Farnborough in Hampshire and I was driving to Brighton twice a week. It was a long journey and the first few weeks were already taking their toll when Graham was offered a job in Aberdeen. I knew there would be a librarianship course on our doorstep in Aberdeen, so the decision was made to relocate and start again.

We moved in January 2001 and I found a temporary clerical job at the medical school and made an application to the Robert Gordon University for one of their three Library Association-approved courses. I chose MSc

Information Analysis, which shared core modules with the traditional Information and Library Studies course, but also had modules on public policy processes, business policy and financial analysis, and information design.

The course included a fieldwork placement and I went to the health promotions department of the local health board. At that time, they operated an information resource centre on Aberdeen's main shopping street, with leaflets and resources available to encourage healthy lifestyle choices, and advisers on duty to answer enquiries. Upstairs were multiple floors of offices where the health promotion officers for the Grampian region were based. They were redesigning their website and I was asked to gather information from across the organisation on the appearance and function of the site. I arranged interviews with staff members and wrote up my findings as a report.

Alongside my placement, I was planning my MSc research. With the help of my tutor, I designed a qualitative research project looking at how members of the public assess the quality of health information in leaflets and

on the internet. I recruited participants from five patient support groups: a multiple sclerosis support group, a rehabilitation centre, a cancer support group, the local health council, and an alopecia self-help group. These participants formed five focus groups which were asked to discuss a set of leaflets and websites.

I recorded and transcribed the discussions and



Focus group leaflets, MSc project

then coded them thematically to find the ways in which they had defined quality. This was similar to the analysis involved in indexing, although I didn't know that at the time. I identified fifteen quality indicators with the two most important being organisational authority (who had written or published the leaflet or website) and the use of plain language. The participants did not find many of the indicators of evidence-based information such as date of publication and lists of references, which were being promoted by projects such as DISCERN at that time – see www.discern.org.uk/discern_instrument.php They demonstrated a lack of confidence in their ability

p9 ☞ to select quality health information and relied on pre-selection by authoritative sources such as libraries, support groups, and health professionals. They also expressed a high level of distrust of the internet. It would be interesting to see if this has changed 18 years later.

By the time I finished my MSc, I was expecting our first child. I stayed at home with her for a while, then returned to RGU as a Research Assistant, working for the professor who had supervised my MSc dissertation. I helped prepare literature reviews and research applications relating to information literacy. I also wrote up my MSc for publication in the *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*.

My second child was on his way when it was time for my contract to be renewed at RGU, and I decided to stop working for a while. Six weeks before my son was born, my daughter was old enough to be enrolled at a local playgroup, which later became my new place of employment too. At that time, the playgroup provided pre-school education for 50 children across morning and afternoon sessions with nine members of part-time staff. Each session was run by three members of staff and a parent on duty, with each parent taking a turn about once a month. It wasn't long after my daughter started at the playgroup that I found myself on the committee and running the parent duty rota. A couple of years later, I joined the staff team as the Playgroup Administrator, looking after the payroll, staff training records, funding and grant applications, waiting lists, registrations with regulatory bodies, and information packs.

During those years, I also dabbled in creative writing, doing some short courses including a module through the Open University. I found it difficult to come up with imaginative ideas for stories and poems, but I enjoyed the editing process and preparing text according to publishers' house styles. I realised I was probably better suited to an editing or proofreading role than pursuing creative writing further.

Once both my children were at primary school, I looked for a job that would allow me to work in document production to build on what I had learned through my information literacy research and creative writing courses. I found a position as a management system technical author in an oil company. They had over 600 policies, standards, procedures and guidelines in their safety management system, which covered the operation of five North Sea production platforms and the Brent pipeline. Many of these documents are legally required by the Health and Safety Executive. In a team of five technical authors, I created new documents and processed updates of existing documents using controlled termi-

nology and set formats. My training included a course on applying Human Factors (Ergonomics) to procedural documents that showed how safety can be affected by word choice, layout and procedural structure.

Some typos were comedic rather than dangerous; I worked on a document that emphasised the importance of preventing gas "leeks". Other interesting mental images were created by some of the industry-specific terminology. For example, the wellhead flow control system is known as a Christmas tree because it has lots of branches sticking out, while my favourite set of terms involved pigs, pig launchers and pigging runs. The acronym PIG expands to Pipeline Inspection Gauge, and it is rumoured that this is a backronym named for the squealing sound made by early cleaning 'pigs' as they were sent down the pipes.

Some of the documents were more interesting than others; I once spent a week writing about different types of bin. I wondered why the document was called the Garbage Management Procedure rather than the Rubbish Management Procedure and learned that the American-sounding term 'garbage' was taken from the relevant international marine convention. I felt that either choice sounded like a bad review.



PIG pipeline graphic by Enara Abad

Most of the documents are delivered electronically, but each platform also has a set of key documents in hard copy. From time to time, a member of our team would be sent offshore to conduct an audit. I was offered the option to go but I declined, mainly because I was frightened of the survival training course, which includes helicopter underwater escape training. The participants are strapped into a simulated fuselage that is lowered into a swimming pool and turned upside down under the water. They have to hold their breath while they wait for the water to stop churning and then they can attempt to escape through the window, with divers on hand to pull them free if they are too slow.

Although I ducked out of survival training, I did volunteer to be part of the company's onshore emergency response team as a relative responder (call handler). In an emergency, a phone line is available for relatives

p 10 ➡ to make enquiries about their loved ones. The training course was run by two ex-policewomen who taught us what we should and shouldn't say, followed by a simulated emergency scenario involving a ditched helicopter. We took calls from other staff members who pretended to be relatives and who also demonstrated other types of calls we might receive by pretending to be a florist offering their services and, of course, members of the press. Thankfully, I was never called out for a real emergency.

By 2018 it felt like time to move on from the oil industry, especially as companies across Aberdeen were starting to decommission their offshore assets. I had

completed the SfEP-approved Basic Proofreading distance learning module through the Publishing Training Centre, although I hadn't made a firm plan to do further proofreading training or to contact publishers for work. Then I found an article about indexing in an old copy of the *Writers and Artists Yearbook* from 2006. After reading more on the Society of Indexers' website and trying the pre-enrolment exercise, I signed up for the training course. The final step to moving from my past life to my present indexing life came in May 2020 when I received my PIA feedback and accreditation notification, followed by a first commission a few weeks later.

My Neck of the Woods

Philip Hillyer on the delights of Scotland's capital city

What is Edinburgh like to live in? Everyone's experiences are different, but perhaps I could broadly divide them into living or working right in the centre or within a 15-minute walk; living within a 15-minute bus ride; or living within a 30-minute bus ride – just inside the by-pass. Then there's student Edinburgh; festival Edinburgh; dog-walker Edinburgh; and golfer Edinburgh. Over the past 45 years, I've experienced most of these, sometimes simultaneously; I don't golf, but my wife Eileen and I do walk the dog on an old golf course with magnificent views to Edinburgh Castle and Arthur's Seat and, on a clear day, twenty-five miles down the coast to Berwick Law and the Bass Rock.

What of Edinburgh in books? Leaving aside the fictional genteel Edinburgh of Alexander McCall Smith's '44 Scotland Street' and 'Sunday Philosophy Club' series, and the grittier city policed by Ian Rankin's DI John Rebus and Quintin Jardine's ACC Bob Skinner, my mind turns to three titles that have been on my shelves for many years. There's a faded and brittle copy of the self-explanatory *Edinburgh for Free* (1986); the massive and comprehensively indexed *Buildings of Scotland: Edinburgh* (1984/88) that explains how and why the city looks like it does; and *The Colinton Story: Celebrating 900 years of a Scottish Parish* (1994), the first 800 or so of which were passed when it was outside the city boundary.

The facilities of Edinburgh enjoyable for free all year round are amazing, ranging from museums and art galleries to riverside or old cemetery walks. There's also a 'nearly free' element at festival time, or should I say festivals time (there are so many). But to stick to the International Festival, the days when anyone, young or old, could queue on the day for a £5 ticket to a play or concert may be long gone, but there are still great bargains to be had if you know where and when to look. Having fixed a budget, as soon as the programme is announced in March one guesses which performances will be sold out immediately; which will still have discounted tickets in July; and which will be apparently unavailable right

until performance week. In particular, the Usher Hall has almost perfect acoustics, wherever you sit. Price is not necessarily a guide to the best seats. Our favourites are the hard wooden ones in the organ gallery behind the orchestra (regulars remember to bring their own cushions and – for Wagner – sandwiches). Looking almost directly into the eyes of Marin Alsop conducting the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra or Simon Rattle the LSO are experiences not to be forgotten.

The buildings of Edinburgh are often best seen from the top of a double-decker bus, although that doesn't tell you if the anonymous or even well-known architects and builders made suitable allowances for wind and rain. The renovation projects of the 1980s were necessary because the tenements erected a century previously had used an inferior sandstone, but my guess is that it will be well before the 2060s that the deficiencies of more recent housing stock will need attention. Perhaps the sturdy 1930s bungalows (like ours) typical of the 30-minute travel zone, although not much loved by planners, will outlive them.

Then there's Colinton village, our home for nearly 30 years: five miles from Edinburgh Castle, and the only part of the city we've visited since early March. The almost-empty 44 bus still trundles into town on a reduced timetable, but for us Edinburgh 2020 – apart from the weekly supermarket run – has chiefly been the local post office, pharmacy (volunteer prescription deliverers sprang up almost overnight), corner shop (the enterprising owner stocked loo rolls when the supermarkets didn't, and sourced bread flour and yeast in bulk to divide up for home bakers); social distancing at the fish van; cheerful couriers and postmen; GP consultations usually by phone; the online church services; and what was originally the Daily Permitted Walk.

As lockdown progressed we gradually settled into a daily exercise routine on the slopes of the nearby Pentland hills or in Colinton Dell beside the Water of Leith, discovering by trial and error that each of the

p11 ☞ stages could be a welcome mental health boost. In summary, we found it was best to:

- 1 Get up early and go out early (we managed to be out by 06:45 between March and September), whatever the weather (having a springer spaniel to exercise helps).
- 2 Be ready for anything on your walk to surprise you (an ever-ready palm-size camera with a good zoom may record it, as long as one doesn't let the mechanics spoil actual enjoyment).
- 3 Save the best weekly photo to use as a PC desktop background or to share with someone else.

The mental health boosts were cumulative, and however many times in ten months we attempted to photo the same landscape, animal or bird, achieving a good result was always significant. Composing or cropping a photo is, after all, an exercise in what some people call mindfulness. The photos often had no connection with what was going on in the wider world, but sometimes they did, at least emotionally. I recall two:

April 12 – Easter Day. Churches being all shut, even for open air services, I walked the dog under the rainbow painted in the old Colinton railway tunnel. It was meant neither as a biblical nor an NHS rainbow, as it had been painted the previous October as part of the two-year [Colinton Tunnel Mural community project](#): some 140 yards of decorative panels linked by Robert Louis Stevenson's poem 'From a Railway Carriage' (the young RLS often visited his maternal grandfather's Colinton manse). Even so . . .



Colinton Tunnel Mural rainbow

December 8. First public Covid-19 vaccinations. As we walked up the side of the local reservoir, a flock of geese flew over, gradually changing direction. There were at least 105 birds (as the photos later proved), flying wing-tip to wing-tip. They seemed to know where they were going, and perhaps humankind now also does.

There were, of course, also days when even a walk didn't lift the spirits. The news was relentlessly gloomy.

It was an effort to walk the same route, and even more of an effort to do any kind of work. I was glad that two-thirds of my business has always been copy-editing. It seemed so much easier to do concentrated editing of 25-page journal articles than to keep the evolving shape of the index to a 300-page book in mind. I was also in a position to decline larger indexing projects when maintaining mental health seemed more pressing.

I kept an outline diary for the first few weeks of lockdown, mainly to try to make some sense of the rapid changes, but (like many) abandoned it when things 'settled down' and the days started merging into one another even more. A few incidents stood out that will be remembered beyond 2020. The most significant event in our street was the death of its longest-resident inhabitant. When it became clear that almost nobody would be allowed to attend the funeral, it was arranged for the hearse to be formally driven up to the turning circle at the end of the cul-de-sac, preceded by the undertaker in full fig, for us all to pay our respects. Fellow-feeling was also reinforced in December, when Christmas decorations appeared in windows and gardens about a fortnight earlier than usual.

I first came to Edinburgh as a postgraduate student in 1975, partly because most of the other Scottish universities seemed impossibly distant from southern England. I met my Scottish wife-to-be here, although we didn't

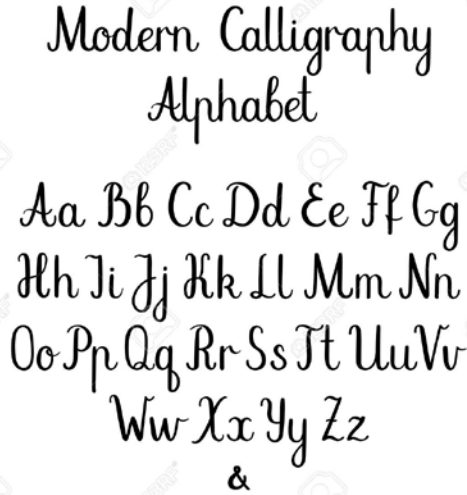
realise it at the time. After starting separate nursing service and theological lecturing stints in India sponsored by the Church of Scotland, Eileen and I were married in Madras (as it then was) in 1981 and returned to Edinburgh in 1984. We initially stayed in the city so my new editing and indexing business could take full advantage of the university and other library facilities and I could benefit from membership of the Edinburgh SI group

(how I welcomed [Drusilla Calvert](#)'s workshops on the latest version of Macrex!). It was a time when online fact and bibliography checking facilities were about ten years in the future, photocopying was a substantial business cost, and laser printers were built like tanks and cost £1000 or more.

A lot has changed since then. These days editors and indexers can work almost anywhere, but why would anyone want to leave Edinburgh?

see also . . .

Who still writes in longhand? Well, your correspondent for one; much less copiously than he used to, admittedly, but every day, even if it's only an *aide-mémoire* that remains in plain sight on his desk (as opposed to being obscured by the detritus on his screen desktop) or a



Twenty-first century hand lettering

shopping list or a menu of stuff he intends to record that day on the Sky Q box. That's probably a lot more (and a lot more regular) handwriting than by most, especially those younger than, say, 50. Even among his contemporaries, much of this kind of material will be committed instead to a phone, but he gave up on his smartphone when its demands to be recharged occurred more often than he found any use for the actual phone, and now he manages perfectly well with an old-style push-button device utterly lacking in bells, whistles and the wherewithal to display lists.

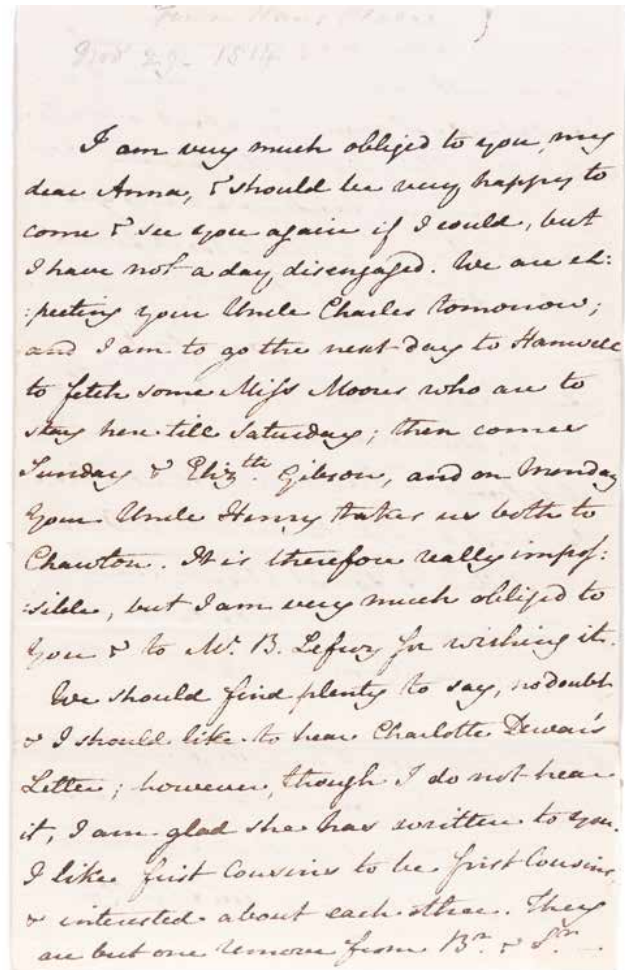
As is the case with most scribblers, his hand has discernibly deteriorated over the decades and is increasingly challenging for the eyes of others, even sometimes for his own waning sight. Frantically taking notes at university lectures first did for the quality of his script. It was further eroded by taking down phone messages before there were answering machines, and scribbling in the dark in the auditoriums of theatres and film viewing rooms. As many do, he developed his own brand of shorthand which has remained in his repertoire.

So most of his handwritten material is for his eyes only. Any notes he needs to leave for his partner are considerably expressed in block capitals, so that there is a fair chance of the message being reasonably legible. Capital letters are easier to distinguish because they are usually separated (the meaning of 'block'). Lower case writing naturally becomes cursive, which is to say that the letters are joined up, flow into each other and are wont to lose their essential character, particularly in writing executed at speed. The idea of "dashing off a quick note" is intimately connected with one's writing becoming completely impenetrable.

Everyone's handwriting is unique; it is one of the elements that always distinguishes otherwise identical twins. There is considerable opposition to the notion that one's hand reveals one's character with any degree of reliability. The pseudoscience of graphology reckons to trace character traits in the particular curlicues of penmanship, but no one should set any store by such self-promoting claptrap, and certainly no one's career advancement should depend on the reading of the runes supposedly revealed by a candidate writing on paper.

In another part of the forest, the lovely and ancient art of calligraphy raises handwriting into the sublime, enjoying a revival of interest in western nations throughout last century (of course it had never been away in the east).

Most of us still celebrate an annual handwriting bonanza in December, when seasonal cards need to be sent by snail mail to those whose email details we don't possess or whose social media presence we don't access. Do people still send cards with the personal details printed? This used to be done decades ago by people who liked to think of themselves as too busy to write out dozens of signatures; their recipients were apt to deplore the impersonality of such a greeting. Indeed, many lamented any intrusion of typing into private correspondence. The use of ecards and greetings **p14**



A letter in Jane Austen's hand

p13 ☞ on social media (favoured in this house where possible) seems not to attract comparable opprobrium.

For some, the only piece of handwriting nowadays required of them is a signature, though online simulacra of signatures have become acceptable in some quarters. But as the relative dexterity of our fingers dwindles, so the output of those fingers is compromised; we may indeed suffer from the condition known as dysgraphia, wherein our ability to control our handwriting declines and even disintegrates. As a Facebook friend reported recently, "the last time I used a cheque, the bank declined to honour it, stating that the signature had changed from the one on their records". This looks like a powerful argument for altering one's last will and testament with some care [*see also* Practical & Technical, p15].

As far as writing cheques goes, it seems likely that the endangered cheque book will be rendered extinct by the pandemic. In our house, we always paid for our delivery of logs by cheque, but last month for the first time we were asked to use the credit card over the phone. Your correspondent used to find paying in a cheque was a useful occasion for a brisk, leg-stretching walk down to the bank, but the branch closed a few years ago and the need to go to the post office, which still forwards cheques to banks, has dwindled until months separate such errands. Moreover, he would always pay for shop transactions

with cash up to about 25 quid (partly to favour their till with the change that otherwise strained the fabric of his pockets and partly so as not to hold up people queueing behind), but since the last time all his change was used up and as shops have got keen to avoid handling money (either coin or folding), he has found himself flourishing his contactless card for the most modest of purchases, unthinkable before 2020. How long, long ago seems the carefully-worded sign you would see in small shops: "Please do not ask for credit, as a refusal often offends".

The death of the cheque book marks, with a certain pang of *weltschmerz*, another change in the fabric of society. Lord knows, Covid-19 has seen off many features of our days, mostly ones that can be accounted behavioural. With what is still sometimes referred to as "the new century" already a fifth gone, the character of the twentieth century feels as anachronistic as that of the nineteenth. With the twin menaces of a much more virulent and much less harnessable pandemic, and of the unheeded warnings of the effects of climate change putting a credible question mark over whether anyone will live to see the 22nd century, the disappearances that we quietly mourn will count as very little in face of the cataclysmic changes that may come.

The Locator

see also . . . : a response

In his October 'see also . . .' column, The Locator highlighted some problems of indexing names with surname prefixes. Practice varies among countries so, for example, the French writer Simone de Beauvoir should be indexed under B but the Italian opera librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte under D. And someone born and bred in an English-speaking country is conventionally indexed under the prefix, even if their surname is of foreign origin: for example, no-one would look anywhere but at D for the poet Walter de la Mare, who though partly of French descent was born, lived and died in England. As The Locator says, the SI Training Course covers this in detail (in Module C), though it's worth saying that this guidance is primarily for foreign names in indexes to English texts rather than those in foreign languages. There is more useful detail in the articles on foreign names published as 'centrepieces' in *The Indexer* (see <https://www.theindexer.org/indexes/centrepieces/>).

'The Locator' rightly says that indexers should be guided by reader expectations. But can we always tell what these are? His example of Wernher von Braun is a case in point: an aerospace engineer born in Germany in 1912, he moved to the United States after World War II. As a well-known person he is easily checkable online, and as the major part of his career was in the US he is most sensibly indexed at V, and not at B as he would be if he had stayed in Germany. But things are not always so clear-cut. Lorenzo Da Ponte, mentioned above, turns out to have

spent his last 30 years or so in the United States – news to me, though as he is Italian he goes under D either way (there are different rules for medieval Italian names, but that's another story . . .).

But what if the person concerned is not well known and the text gives no clue to nationality or domicile? Time and budgets are unlikely to allow researching their origins and life history; one can hedge one's bets by picking one alternative and cross-referring from the other, but there may not be room if space is tight. Following the usage of the text can be a clue – does it refer, for example, to the photographer Eric de Maré as 'Maré' or 'de Maré'? Authors sometimes get this wrong, though, and a quick Google search may better indicate usual practice.

Reader expectations may change over the years. I can't forgive Dan Brown for calling his book *The Da Vinci Code*, because poor Leonardo da Vinci, who came from the small Italian town of Vinci and was known to generations of art historians as just 'Leonardo', is now more likely to be looked for under D (or possibly V). So we have to allow for this, and at least make a cross-reference from 'Da Vinci' to the 'correct' entry at L – however much this may exasperate.

*Ann Hudson
SI Training Director*

The Indexer

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Editorial
Mary Coe

History of the term 'indexer' in British census returns
Nicola King

Embedded indexing with Word. Part 3 – shifting method and field codes for cross-references and page ranges
Walter Greulich

'A solid foundation for a career in indexing': the story of the Society of Indexers' training course
Ann Hudson

Rewriting the book in the index: what does this mean?
Stephen Ullstrom

COVID-19 and the freelance book indexer: a preliminary analysis
Ann Kingdom

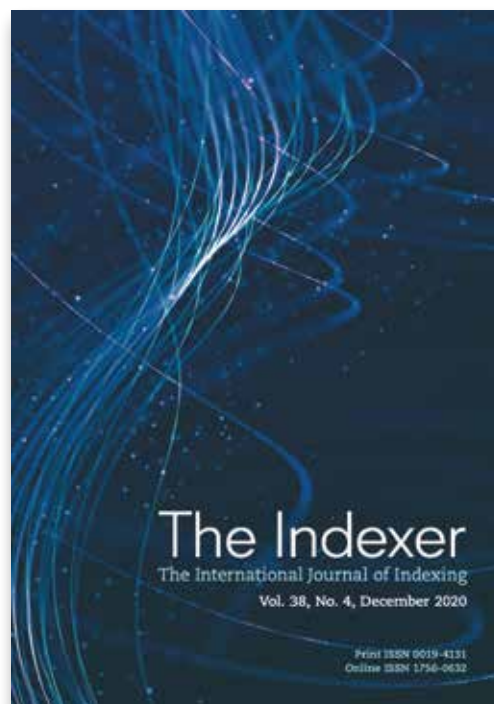
Accolades for indexers: indexing awards 2020
Ann Kingdom

Diversity in Canadian Publishing Award




Indexes reviewed
Edited by Christine Shuttleworth

Book review: Hazel K. Bell, Indexing biographies & other stories of human lives
Madeleine Davis and Sherry Quinn

Conference calendar



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Signing PDF documents

From time to time, I find myself being asked to sign a document sent as a PDF. Most recently I had to initial and date changes made to an indexing contract. Even though I have done this several times over the years, it happens sufficiently infrequently to send me momentarily into a panic. How do you sign a PDF?

In the good-old-bad-old-days you could only print off the document, sign it by hand and send it back via 'snail mail'. Later, I progressed to printing it off, signing by hand, scanning the signed document and attaching the scan to an email. Both these methods still work, of course.

Now, though, signing documents electronically has become much easier. For example, using Adobe Acrobat Reader DC (this is the free version) you can apply a signature by: (a) typing, (b) drawing (on a touchscreen or with a mouse), or (c) adding an image of your normal signature. Method (c) requires you to have already created your signature image. You can do this by writing your signature on a clean sheet of paper and photographing it. Save it to your computer (I find the easiest way to transfer a photo from my phone or iPad is to email it to myself). Crop the photo to remove excess background (the Snipping Tool is useful for this) and save the resulting image as a suitably named file, so you can find it again.

Before adding any text or signature to a PDF, make a copy of the original and keep it safe, in case you need to start again. Then:

Open the PDF. (Make sure 'single-key accelerators' are turned OFF if you use these. Edit > Preferences > General).

Click on Tools > Fill & Sign (Fig. 1). You will be asked "Who needs to sign?" Assuming it's just you, select this option. The Fill & Sign toolbar appears, and the cursor turns to |Ab indicating readiness to add text (Fig. 2). (There are other ways to open the Fill & Sign toolbar. For example, click the purple pen icon at the right of the screen, or click Sign > Fill & Sign from the menu bar at the top of the screen (Figs 3 and 4). If you

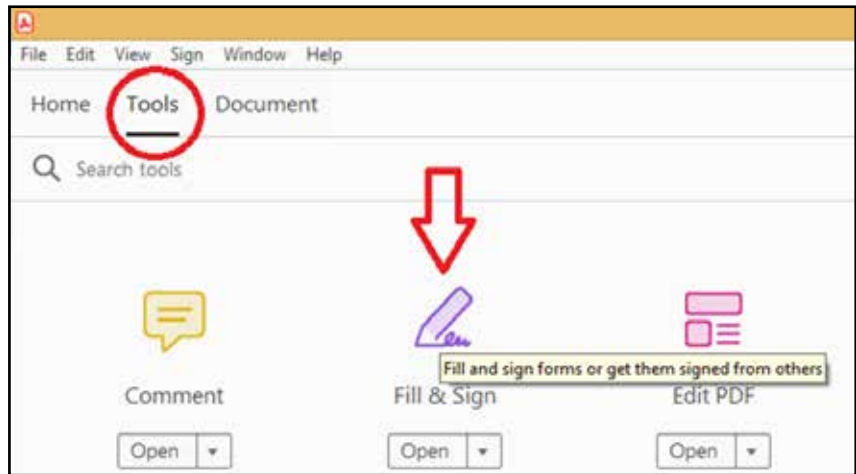


Fig. 1. Click the Fill & Sign icon under Tools.

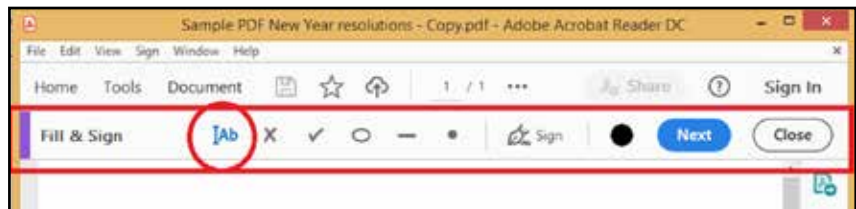


Fig. 2. The Fill & Sign toolbar, with text insertion option selected.

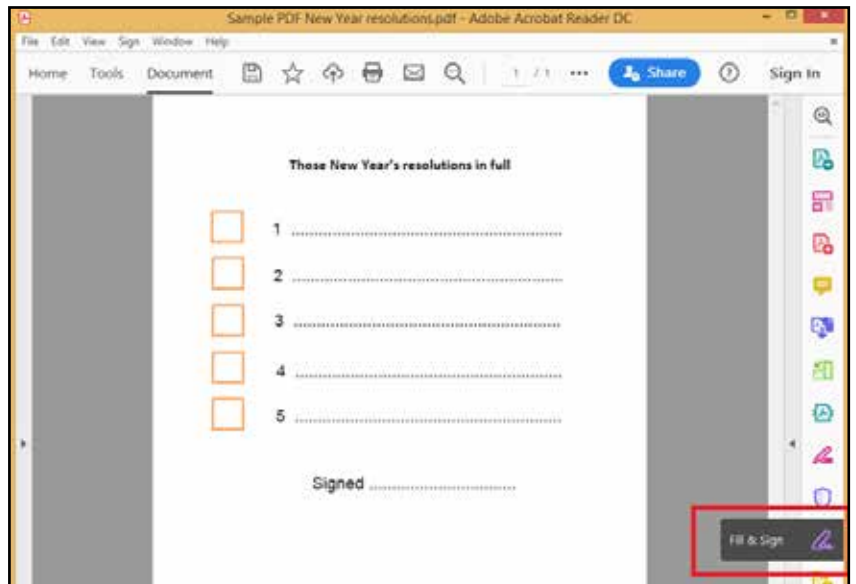


Fig. 3. Another route to Fill & Sign.



Fig. 4 Yet another route to Fill & Sign

p16 cannot see the menu bar, try pressing F9.)

You can then click in the document and add text. There are also options to add ticks, check marks, etc, which you can use to fill in forms. You can select these from the mini toolbar that appears above the text box (Fig. 5; click on the three dots to see more options) or from the Fill & Sign tool



Fig. 5 The mini toolbar appears above the text box

bar towards the top of the screen.

When you are ready to sign, click 'Sign' on the Fill & Sign tool bar and select 'Add Signature'. A box opens where you can type your name or choose to draw or add an image (select the appropriate option at the top of the box (Fig. 6)). To use your previously created signature image, click on 'Image' and then navigate to the file you require, select it and click 'Open'. Your signature will appear in the box. Note there is the option to 'Save signature' which is checked by default. This means your signature will be available directly next time you want to sign a PDF - you won't need to browse for the image. Click 'Apply'.

Move your cursor to where you want your signature to appear and click. You can adjust the size and position by dragging the corner (for size) or edge (for position) of the box. If you want to change the colour of the ink, click on the solid circle on the Fill & Sign tool bar and make your choice (Fig. 7).

If things go wrong and you need to delete something, just click on it to select it and click on the small dustbin icon in the mini toolbar (Fig. 8).

When you have finished, click 'Close' at the right-hand end of the Fill & Sign toolbar. (This closes the toolbar, not the document). You will no longer be able to edit anything you added before signing, though you still have the option to close the document without saving the changes, if you wish. If, instead of choosing 'Close' you select 'Next' on the Fill & Sign

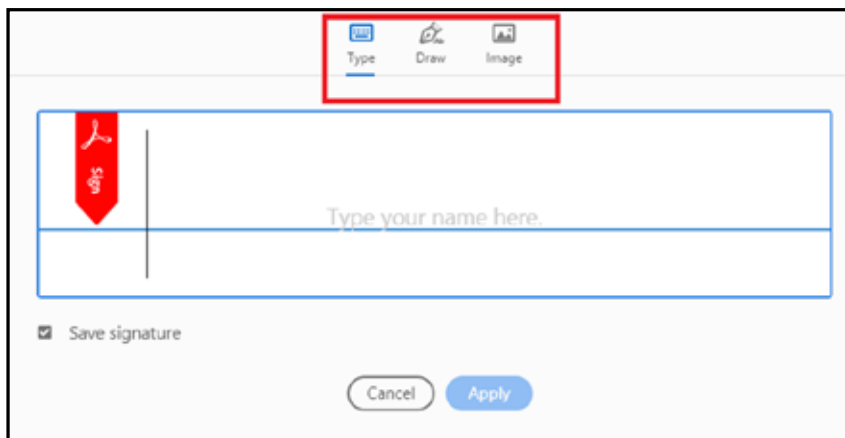


Fig. 6 The signature box: choose 'type', 'draw' or 'image'

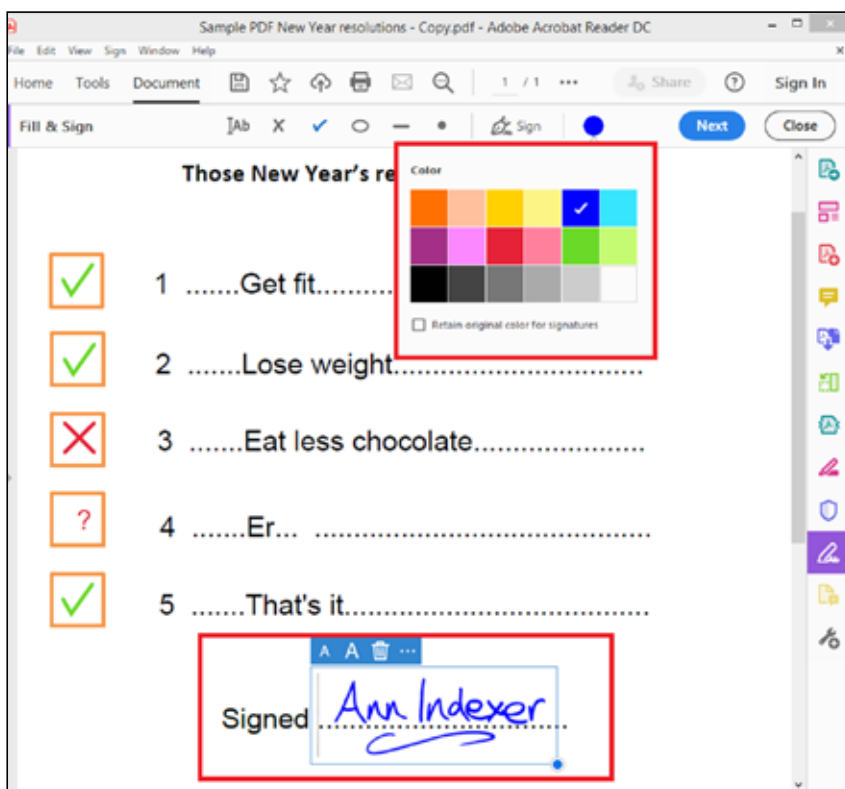


Fig. 7 You can choose your ink colour

toolbar, you have the option to share the document via a link, or invite others to sign the document. If you find yourself here and do not want these options, just close the window and you will be back in your PDF.

If you have a touch screen or a tablet, you can use the drawing option and write on the screen with a stylus or your finger. You can even draw using the mouse, though the results can be a bit shaky. For initialing the contract changes I referred to earlier, I used my Dropbox to access the document from my iPad. Upon opening the PDF in Dropbox, I found an option to 'Add text or signature' and was able to sign with my finger



Fig. 8 Mini toolbar delete symbol

on the screen, as well as adding a date stamp. It turned out to be surprisingly quick and simple to do.

Wendy Baskett
wbaskett@pinpointindexing.co.uk

CINDEX™ Reminders . . . not Resolutions

The last nine months have been extraordinary in terms of the number of indexing projects offered, reconnecting with Cindex users who have returned to indexing, or welcoming indexers new to Cindex. It has also been a time of departures: long-time indexers deciding to retire and, sadly, a few whose indexing activities have been prematurely cut short. So our support mailbox has seen a broader variety of messages than usual, and I offer the following reminders which stem from those messages.

A new machine

If you have purchased a new machine, it is not enough to simply transfer the program from your old machine. It needs to be properly installed, using either CindexSetup.exe (Windows) or Cindex Installer.pkg (Mac). If you have not saved the installer file we will gladly send you, without charge, a link to download the version (3 or 4) for which you are eligible.

If you have not already upgraded from v.3 to v.4 but wish to do so, the cost is \$75. (From v.2 to v.4 the cost is \$190; for all earlier versions the cost is \$230).

An upgraded operating system

The same principle applies, but can be a little more complicated, especially on Windows machines. Contact us if you need help deciding your options.

Returning to Cindex after a break

Inputting entries should feel familiar (although there are some additional shortcuts on both the index and record entry toolbars) that may be new to you. However, if you are on a Windows machine you may initially be confused by the default configuration of the NEW RECORD display. Some time ago (and to be honest I forget exactly when), we provided users with two options: either a full-width, fixed

entry space below the index entries or a separate (floating) window which can be sized and placed however you prefer. The former is the default; the latter can be activated at EDIT MENU/PREFERENCES under the EDITING tab.

After a lengthy break, it is always worth reviewing the Menu items to see exactly what and where things are. This is especially true if you have upgraded your software. For example, in v.4 the new CHECK INDEX item under the TOOLS MENU now incorporates the earlier (all versions through v.3) VERIFY CROSS-REFERENCES, as well as providing so much more. Each dialogue box offers context-sensitive descriptions and Chapter 14 in the User's Guide also provides a concise explanation of each menu item.

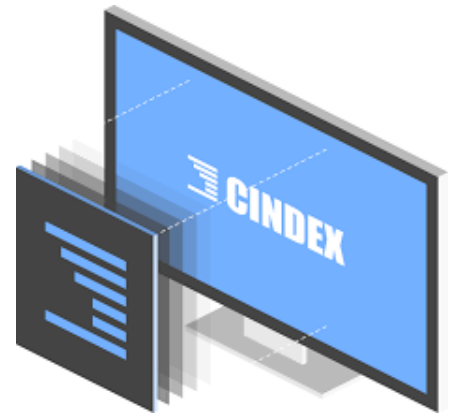
Paying it forward

Our single-user license agreement permits the permanent transfer of the program, under the following conditions:

- The new user accepts the terms of the single-user agreement (please contact us if you would like a full copy of the single-user license agreement).
- The previous user retains no copies of Cindex for Windows Standard Edition or Cindex for Mac Edition or any accompanying documents or installation materials.
- Indexing Research is notified of the transfer. This last condition is especially important so that the new user can receive full support from us, plus eligibility for upgrades

Personal information

Please keep us updated with any changes to your contact information. Every now and then we receive upgrade orders or queries about software-machine compatibility that we cannot immediately match to anyone in our database, and we have



to respond with a query of our own. The mismatch is always resolved to everyone's satisfaction and is mostly a result of changes in your personal information such as a name change, a license transfer of which we were not notified, an incorrectly ordered item, or even (sigh!) a database error on our part. In any correspondence your serial number is always extremely useful.

We like to keep our database of users up to date – only for our own verification purposes. We do not provide anyone at any time with your personal information, unless we have your explicit consent. For example, sometimes we are contacted by a new user who would like to connect with other indexers in their area, usually with a view to arranging one-on-one training. This results in a two-step dance: (1) I obtain permission from the new user to pass on their contact information, and (2) I contact current local user(s), explain the request and provide the new user's contact details. The existing user is under no obligation to make contact, a fact that is made clear to both parties.

Lastly, and always, please take care and stay safe and well, as we navigate a new year and continue to adjust to the "new normal".

Frances Lennie
Indexing Research
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Local groups

East Anglia

The East Anglia Group kept in touch using Zoom in the autumn, as five people participated in a meeting in October. It was primarily a social event as we had not met for quite a while, but we did consider a range of business-related issues, notably building up a customer base. We discussed a variety of techniques which could help us be efficient, particularly the potential of macros, labelling and templates. The hope is that we can resume face to face get-togethers when possible but, until then, we will continue with Zoom meetings through 2021.

Carol Maxwell
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London

We've had two good meetings recently, both by Zoom. Five of us met for an interesting discussion in November on our experiences of indexing a House of Commons library briefing on 'Deforestation in the Amazon'. Four indexes had been circulated beforehand. We were a mix of experienced and newer indexers, including **Valeria Padalino** who is thinking about which book to choose for her Pre-qualification Indexing Assignment (PIA).

We considered the different approach that would be needed for a simple index to the briefing compared with the treatment that would be appropriate had this been a chapter in a larger book.

We talked about the dangers of being tempted into doing too much research for an interesting topic – not efficient use of time. We decided that it would be better to index material under the country where the name of a leader is not spelled out, in this case the Irish Taoiseach and French President.

Among other points discussed were the difficulties of indexing foreign names and where English speakers would expect to find them and also how to flag up headings that might need double entries or cross-references. The group function of indexing software programs can be very useful here. Finally we talked about what checks we perform be-

fore sending off an index.

There was a very good turnout for our Zoom morning coffee and mince pies in December. We were delighted to welcome **Jennifer Holbert**, a newcomer to the Society, plus a few visitors from neighbouring groups, all dressed in suitably Christmassy attire. Unfortunately my attempts to do a screenshot of the ten of us plus four cats ended in failure so you will just have to imagine it.

Rohan Bolton
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Sussex

Seven members of the SI Sussex group met by Zoom on Monday 14 December. Among the topics discussed was the use of samples during the process of quoting for work. Practice varied among the group on requesting samples: some members always do, others only ask if the book looks tricky or seems to be at the boundaries of subject knowledge. We agreed that samples could be very useful in quoting, especially in terms of checking issues like complex or transliterated names which could prolong the indexing process. One member specified in her quotations that the quote and the turnaround time were based on having no unforeseen difficulties with the text.

Tanya Izzard
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Three Choirs

The Choirs group has continued to hold Zoom meetings monthly while we are unable to get **p20**



*Three Choirs group Zoom meeting:
Pam Scholefield, Jan Worrall, Deb Webb,
Heather Noel-Smith, Wendy Baskett, Michelle Brumby, Rosie Dear,
Bridget Houlton, Barbara Hird*

LOCAL GROUPS

p19 together. We average around eight people attending, often including one CIEP member who comes to most of our meetings. We also welcome people from other local groups who want to 'visit' with us from time to time. The December meeting had nine gathered around our computer screens. The screen shot was taken by **Jan Worrall**. We talk about indexing but often move on to just about anything anybody wants to talk about. Topics discussed in December included the AGM and how well it worked on Zoom, technical issues in embedding, how talking to other indexers about indexing can help you solve your indexing conundrums, house moving and just stuff. It was a good meeting as usual. Our next meeting is Wednesday 13 January at 10:30. We will continue to Zoom, but as soon as we are able to meet safely we will do so. Our planned visits for this year will, with luck, resume where we left off when we can get together again.

The Three Choirs wishes everyone a safe, profitable, and happy 2021.

Pam Scholefield
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Yorkshire

For obvious reasons, our regular December haunt of ASK in the Assembly Rooms, York was replaced by a Zoom call. Seven were in attendance (**Ruth Ellis**, **Ann Kingdom**, **Sheree Mosely** and me from the Yorkshire Group, our neighbours **Alan Rutter** and **Moira Greenhalgh** from the NE Group, and **Paul Machen** who was allowed time off for good behaviour). This was primarily a social gathering, and whilst Ann supped her mulled wine and I fought off the cat, the free-flowing conversation somehow ranged from local economies and town infrastructures, via job-sharing and marketing strategies, to dealing with surplus duvets. Being hot on the heels of the SI AGM, we also discussed the Fellowship model and were reminded that Fellows appear higher in the SI subject directories – an added incentive to get those CPD points.

Which leads me nicely on to our planned activities for next year. Following the success of this year's forum-based peer review of the Anne Lister publication, we decided it would be good to run a similar exercise next March. We also decided to host some sort of activity (either via Zoom or in person) on different approaches to creating subheadings. By way of social meetings, we hope to be able to visit Shibden Hall in the summer or early autumn, and of course, hold our Christmas lunch at ASK in York. The Christmas lunch will be on 2 December; the dates for the other events are to be confirmed. We are also seeking volunteers who wish to gain those all-important CPD points by organising the peer review discussion and/or the subheadings activity. Please let me know if you're interested.

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