

# Slidelights

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

## Editorial

Many of us can look back beyond the Internet age, to working out of offices dependent on typewriters, photocopiers, immobile landline telephones (the sole purpose of which was spoken conversation) and so-called snail mail. The post would arrive on the desk enclosed in envelopes or jiffy bags, collected from reception or ferried round the building by some junior from the 'mail room'. Each communication would be dealt with separately, usually answered in another printed-out letter that, if it weren't copied from a standard reply, had to be composed on paper or dictated to a secretary, then signed, sealed in an envelope bearing a typed-out address, franked or stamped and delivered to the mail room for forwarding or dropped into a postbox on the street.

The obvious differences between that era and this are technological, but the more profound differences are those pertaining to mindset. If dealing with colleagues, clients, customers and the public in the past entailed a certain amount of faff, one took it for granted and surrendered to it. Acknowledgment was a major element of communication. Your respondent deserved and indeed customarily received the assurance that her letter – or indeed phone message, if not dealt with by you personally when it came in – had reached its destination and been remarked. But once communication became as simple and instantaneous as email and text, the willingness to bother with it at all went into decline. Some who work out of offices set up automatic replies, not only for when they are away from their desks and devices but also to delay or even extirpate the need to process incoming. Many keep their contact details hidden from searchable routes, so that attempts to reach them are diverted to minions or (yet more reprehensibly) to unread junk piles.

But even those who initiate contact are apt to fail to follow up. Many indexers will have borne the experience of being approached about a job, only to find that the questions they ask or the fee they propose go unanswered. Demanding though it certainly isn't to frame a quick reply, some editors and other varieties of commissioning agent just can't be arsed to do it. That it leaves the indexer in limbo is no concern of theirs. That it constitutes a failure to treat fellow professionals in a recognisably professional manner doesn't occur to them. One thing Sir Tim Berners-Lee cannot have anticipated when creating the World Wide Web was that he would be undermining the habit of good manners.

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*The antediluvian office*

*Sidelights* July 2021

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

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**Presidential Musings**

“Why does it make that noise, Dad?”  
my ten-year-old son asked me the  
other night as we were watching the  
bizarre and extraordinary spectacle of  
our national side cuffing the Ukraini-  
ans in the quarter finals of the Euros.  
“Which noise?”

“That thump every time a player  
gets the ball”.

Well, obviously, I explained, it was  
the sound of the ball thumping into  
the player’s boot. Duh! But then I  
paused. For at once it occurred to me,  
which it never had before, that it was  
very odd even to be able to hear that  
noise. And it further occurred to me  
that on the rare occasions on which  
I’ve watched football live, I haven’t heard it. Live football, at least as regards  
the action on the pitch, might as well be on mute.

Good God, I thought. I’ve never consciously noticed that. Of course you  
can’t hear, at the distance the cameras are from the pitch and over the  
chanting of the fans, the percussion of leather on leather. Not naturally, be  
it never so mighty a thrunker from Harry Kane. They must have directional  
mikes pointed at the ball, or at the players’ feet, or something. (Unless, which  
would be even better but marginally too demented to contemplate, they have  
a dedicated sound-tech pressing a button that makes a generic little thwacky  
doosh noise every time a player kicks the ball).

This struck me as immensely satisfying. The ingenuity involved ... some-  
body has thought about the problem and expended considerable technical  
expertise on making it possible for fans at home to hear players kicking the  
ball; thus making the experience seem that much more real and more imme-  
diate even though, paradoxically, it’s a sort of falsification.

So: great professional skill has been modestly but expertly invested here  
in order to improve a product, in ways that the vast majority of its consumers  
will benefit from without even noticing or stopping to think how it got like  
that. I wonder if that will remind Indexers of anything...

Oh, and: COME ON ENGERLAND!

*Sam Leith*



**Society News**

**Executive Board Report**

The Executive Board has  
met twice recently, on 28  
April and 22 June. Both  
meetings reviewed the  
positive progress made  
towards Fellowship launch  
by **Jan Worrall** and  
**Paul Machen**, and also  
discussed the proposed  
online SI conference,  
reviewing the outcomes of the conference survey by **Ann Kingdom**. Detailed  
conference planning is now under way.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO**

**New Accredited Indexer – MSocInd**  
**Clare Playforth**, Lewes

**New Advanced Members – MSocInd(Adv)**  
**Rob Gibson**, Winchester  
**Michelle Brumby**, Bristol

➡ **p3**

**p2** ↻ In April, EB noted changes to copyright law that may require revision to some aspects of materials use in the training course. EB agreed that **Rachel Gee** would undertake a PTC online course to ensure SI's practice meets the new

requirements. The April meeting also reviewed this year's accounts to date, which show SI to be in a good financial position, and noted with gratitude the generous legacy from late member **Ian Crane**.

By June, the number of new

members approved by EB was equal to the same point in 2020; there had been a large new intake during 2020 so this was encouraging.

*Tanya Izzard, Minutes Secretary*  
[tanya@tanyaizzard.co.uk](mailto:tanya@tanyaizzard.co.uk)

## Behind the Chair

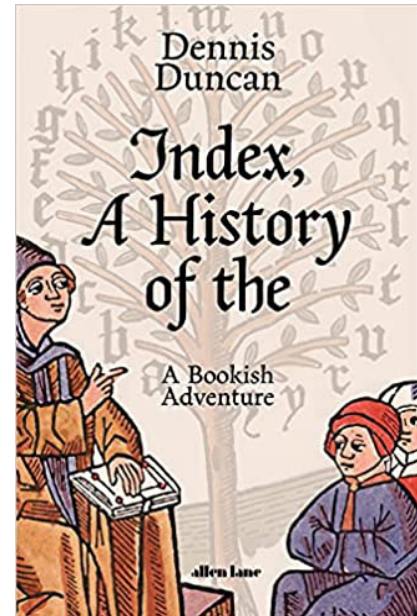
Three new things likely to be of interest to SI members, all of which may affect our working practices.

The first is the launch of the new [online workshop 'Indexing the Past'](#). You can find out more about that on page 4 of this issue. I'd encourage everyone to have a think about doing the workshop, even if they have attended one of **Ann Hudson's** live events. It's always good to revisit and revise your knowledge and approach to fields that you work in. Also, if you think you don't like history and it isn't for you because history is all about the Tudors and Victorians, you may be surprised by the range of works that are being published that include events that occurred in your lifetime, which might once have been called 'current affairs'. I sometimes think that indexing history like this is akin to being a journalist who has to include the who, where, what, when, why and how of an event in their reporting. If you can get these into your headings, you've got indexing the (recent) past sorted. The distant past requires a bit more specialist knowledge and Ann covers some tips and tricks for indexing the archaeological past.

The second will be the launch of the new, revised Fellowship scheme.

**Jan Worrall** and **Wendy Baskett** have been working hard to devise the mechanism for this scheme. Our admin officer, **Paul Machen**, has been compiling information about the workshops and conferences that our members have attended over the last few years to make lists of our CPD 'points' for the first part of the scheme. The second part of the scheme involves evaluating an index, and instructions are being prepared on how to complete the questionnaire. I am sure that there are members who qualified a while ago who will be ready to move on to Fellowship through the new process. Fellowship demonstrates commitment to improving working practice, keeping up with developments and taking part in Society activities.

Last of the three is the forthcoming [book](#) by Dennis Duncan, *Index, A History of the*, due to be published by the Allen Lane imprint of Penguin Random House on 2 September. I quote the publicity material: "Charting its curious path from the monasteries and universities of thirteenth-century Europe to Silicon Valley in the twenty-first, Dennis Duncan reveals how the index has saved heretics from the stake, kept politicians from high office and



made us all into the readers we are today". So, of interest to indexers, their friends and families, and anyone in publishing. If you've heard Dennis speak at SI Conferences, or read his work in *Book Parts* then this will bring it all together and more. I hope that Dennis will be able to take part in our online conference later this year.

*Nicola King*  
[chair@indexers.org.uk](mailto:chair@indexers.org.uk)

## Website and Social Media

By the time you read this, the new workshop 'Indexing the Past' will be up and running on the website [see p 4]. Elsewhere in the workings of the website, we have increased the file size of items we can upload. This allows us to host an updated version of the 'Active Indexing' workshop and removes issues with the size of future workshop files.

Also due to be implemented soon is a change to allow profile images to be used on the forums, rather than the current system which requires users to register on Gravatar to get an image. This will be replaced by the profile image that our professional members also use on their directory entries. Regardless of whether a member qualifies for directory entry,

they will be able to upload an image to use on the forums. In order to allow everyone their own level of privacy, settings will be implemented so that individuals can choose whether they want their image on the forums and/or their directory entry.

On social media, we now have over 1500 Twitter followers. ↻ **p4**

**p3** ↻ Recent growth was driven by National Indexing Day, but also in the following months there were several events in the media increasing interest in indexing. Two Radio 4 programmes helped raise

our profile. A *Word of Mouth* episode featured Michael Rosen in discussion with Judith Flanders on alphabetical order, and Dennis Duncan has begun the promotion of his forthcoming book on Open Book. He is follow-

ing up with various other activities including an online seminar hosted by @IndexofEvidence.

Ruth Ellis  
[website@indexers.org.uk](mailto:website@indexers.org.uk)

## SI Conference 2021

Plans for a virtual conference on Zoom later this year are well under way. The date has not yet been set but we are aiming for November.

As always we are planning a varied mix of sessions which should appeal to all indexers from students to old hands, at whatever stage of their career. Our keynote speaker session will be Dennis Duncan in conversation with **Paula Clarke Bain** who has indexed his latest book, a history of indexing that is due out in September. Dennis has contributed entertaining sessions to a couple of

previous conferences, so this has all the makings of a memorable event.

We also hope to have a couple of sessions on the nuts and bolts of the indexing process, and discussions on all the major indexing programs. And with the 2023 deadline for making tax digital, there should be something on that subject too.

As this conference will be online, there will be plenty of tea, coffee and meal breaks built in to the programme to avoid having to spend too long at a time staring at a screen, but networking opportunities

should also be available throughout. The downside, for those who look on conferences as a welcome break from cooking and washing up, is that catering and clearing up afterwards will be down to individual delegates.

The AGM and Society Matters will also be on the programme. Both went very well on Zoom last year, so we are expecting this year's conference to be very enjoyable. All we need now is your enthusiastic participation.

Rosi Dear  
[conference@indexers.org.uk](mailto:conference@indexers.org.uk)

## International Indexing Conferences

The damaging impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns should not be underestimated, but there have also been some beneficial effects, as individuals and organisations have sought to adapt to the situation and mitigate its effects. The mushrooming of virtual events has enabled us to attend those that under normal circumstances we would probably not even consider – cost, distance and time all being limiting factors. For British indexers, we have had the opportunity to Zoom off to the conferences run by the American Society for Indexing (ASI) and the Indexing Society of Canada/Société canadienne d'indexation (ISC/SCI) without moving from our desks. The Canadian conference was particularly good value for three (long) days of presentations and networking, beginning at 16:00 BST and with informal discussion sometimes going on into the early hours. On the whole, however, with a time difference of only five hours between London and the eastern seaboard of North America, it was not particularly difficult to fit the conference sessions into normal

waking hours. The ASI conference sessions began at 18:00 and finished between 21:30 and 22:30. It was not so easy for indexers further east; one Australian indexer was feeling sleep deprived after three nights at the Canadian conference.

Several SI members linked up, but there might have been more. For our small profession, meeting overseas colleagues and sharing ideas and experience is invaluable. Both conferences had a very welcome international feel, and a spontaneous collaboration between indexers from Germany, Wales, Canada, the USA, the Netherlands and Switzerland is already emerging from a break-out session at the ISC/SCI conference, as will be reported in the December issue of *The Indexer*.

Three of us (**Paula Clarke Bain**, **Susie Marques-Jones** and me) attended both conferences, representing between us a range of indexing experience: one very much semi-retired (me), one busy mid-career (Paula) and one student (Susie). All three of us found both conferences useful and enjoyable,

emerging energised, if also somewhat 'zoomed out'.

The main part of the ASI conference consisted of six presentations over the two-day period, each lasting around 45 minutes. The wide-ranging programme covered the practice of indexing (working more efficiently, embedded indexing), career development and marketing, unusual indexing projects (for instance, *The Mueller Report* into Russian interference in US elections), and more thought-provoking topics (a whistle-stop tour of indexing through the ages, the challenges of musical literature). A 'Happy Hour' also provided an opportunity for some networking and informal chat. A more detailed report of the conference will be published in the September issue of *The Indexer*.

Participants could also log onto sessions in which the basic operation of software and various new features were demonstrated. The expectation was that no one would attend for the whole day but would focus on the software they already ↻ **p6**

# CONTINENTAL CONNECTIONS

INTERNATIONAL INDEXING CONFERENCE

BERLIN, GERMANY, OCTOBER 2022

Organised jointly by the Netherlands and German indexing networks (NIN and DNI) and the Society of Indexers, with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Informationswissenschaft und Informationspraxis (DGI).

Highlights of the conference include keynote addresses by Judith Flanders (author of *A Place for Everything: the Curious History of Alphabetical Order*) and Professor Kiene Brillenburg-Wurth (editor of *Book Presence in a Digital Age*). Through a range of shorter talks and workshops, you will be encouraged to hone your skills, while networking with colleagues from around the world.

## CALL FOR PAPERS

We invite proposals for papers and workshops suitable for an international audience on topics such as:

- Indexing practice and the business of indexing
- Terminology and vocabularies
- Indexing standards
- Technical developments and indexing software
- Client relations
- Developments in the publishing world

**Deadlines and procedure.** Deadline for submitting paper or workshop proposals (in English or German, approx. 300 to 500 words) and short (15-line) biography: 31 July 2021. Proposals should be sent to: [icris-redaktion@d-indexer.eu](mailto:icris-redaktion@d-indexer.eu)

Since we expect a return to quasi-normal international travel by 2022, the conference will take place as a hybrid event – online and on-site!



p4 ☞ used (or were thinking of purchasing). In addition to an excellent demonstration of Index-Manager by **Katharina Munck** and **Pilar Wyman**, I joined **Kamm Schreiner's** SkyIndex session. Both were really informative, and as with all the sessions at both conferences, participants contributed their own experiences and tips in the Zoom chat (and I learnt that chats can be saved).

The format for the ISC/CSI conference was somewhat similar, but with three days each lasting around seven hours, there was scope for more variety. The main presentations included core index-focused topics: the practice of indexing (creating the 'polished

index'), running the indexing business (quoting for projects, building satisfying client relationships), the new NISO indexing standards, active ebook indexes, and becoming a practitioner-researcher. All were recorded for later viewing by registered conference attendees. Formal presentations were interspersed with break-out sessions including 'speed networking' where one was randomly allocated to six others and quiz teams were formed.

Although indexing very little these days, I certainly found enough of interest; two or three days immersed in all things indexing is always enjoyable, helping to renew one's enthusiasm for the profession. Susie

Marques-Jones, part-way through the training course, also very much enjoyed the experience, reporting after the ASI conference that she had "learnt so much about a range of topics" and felt that the content was at an accessible level for students.

Plans for our own online conference in the autumn are at an early stage (see p 4, and I would urge *Slide-lights* readers to put the date in their diaries as soon as it is announced. If you're a regular conference-goer, you already know the value of attending conferences, and if you've never been able to attend one, now's your chance.

*Ann Kingdom*  
[ann.kingdom@googlegmail.com](mailto:ann.kingdom@googlegmail.com)

## 'Indexing the Past'

The past is everything that happened before today, and almost any text may include historical references. So this latest addition to SI's collection of online workshops will be relevant for many indexers, not just history and archaeology specialists.

Books dealing with the past, such as biographies, political memoirs, diaries, local history, art history, archaeology, genealogy, history of science and other historical topics, are a rich field for indexers. Whether you index academic books or 'trade' books aimed at the general reader you should find plenty that is useful in this workshop. It aims to demystify indexing the past and to help with common problems which may affect any indexer at any time.

The workshop started out as a 'live' one which I presented at SI conferences and to local groups. This online version is updated and considerably expanded, and has benefited from the input of many indexers who attended the 'live' workshops or participated in

Zoom discussions during lockdown, and from several who commented on drafts of this new version. Throughout the workshop there are links to online resources and suggestions for useful reference books.

The first section, on 'People', discusses how to decide which personal names to include and advises on indexing titles of nobility, kings and queens, saints, soldiers, etc. The next section, 'Places', confronts problems such as changes in country names and boundaries and in the form of place names. A section on 'Things' discusses objects of unknown function, a particular problem in archaeological indexing, and buildings which may have changed their use and appearance over the years.

Other topics include the use of chronological subheadings; how to index historical periods (often a nebulous area, with different people defining them differently); and spotting new indexable topics as scholarship develops along fresh

pathways. Even if you are indexing the past, you need always to have an eye on the future.

SI's online workshops enable you to study in your own time and at your own pace. This workshop consists of a Powerpoint file, suitable for viewing on a PC, tablet or smartphone, and accompanying exercises. You can take a break at any time, and you can do the sections in a different order if you prefer. Tutor support is included, and if you complete all the exercises, you can count the workshop towards your CPD points – valuable if you are considering applying for the new Fellowship qualification to be launched later this year.

[Purchase details](#) and a list of other workshops dealing with various practical and technical aspects of indexing are on the web. Also in preparation is an online version of 'Words and pictures', **Joan Dearnley's** workshop on indexing art books and catalogues.

*Ann Hudson*  
[training@indexers.org.uk](mailto:training@indexers.org.uk)

## Ian Crane Legacy

Earlier this year the Executive Board was delighted to discover that past Chairman of the Society of Indexers Council, **Ian Crane**, who died in 2017, had left a legacy to the Society.

An [obituary and memories](#) of Ian appeared in *Slide-lights* July 2017.

EB discussed the legacy at a recent meeting and decided to use the money to support the award for the

best newly Accredited Indexer. Hence the Betty Moys Award will become the Moys Crane Award from 2021.

*Nicola King*  
[chair@indexers.org.uk](mailto:chair@indexers.org.uk)

## Drusilla Calvert

With the death of Drusilla Calvert, following five years suffering from the increasingly severe effects of Progressive Supranuclear Palsy (PSP, a rare progressive condition leading to problems with balance, movement, vision, speech and swallowing), we lost someone who had been at the forefront of the profession for almost four decades. Known worldwide along with her husband **Hilary** for her pioneering work on indexing software, she was also a key figure in the Society of Indexers, as testified by the Bernard Levin award. Equally importantly, however, we lost a very dear friend.

Through years of her service on various Society committees (and prior to the 2003 review and subsequent rationalisation there were a great many committees), many of us got to know Drusilla well, particularly while relaxing over post-meeting drinks. With her warmth, her infectious sense of humour and her zest for life, she was always great company.

Brought up in Cambridge, Drusilla attended Cambridgeshire High School for Girls, before going up to Girton College to read Music and Anglo-Saxon. She and Hilary met on a University of Cambridge ski trip, where he wowed her with his skiing skills, and she caught his attention by winning a doughnut-eating



competition. They got to know each other better in Salzburg after the ski trip. With a postgraduate diploma in librarianship from UCL under her belt (plus the Society's four-day indexing course at London's North-Western Polytechnic), she was well placed to embark on a freelance indexing career, which dovetailed well with her musical activities (playing and teaching the cello) and bringing up her three daughters. Family was very important to Drusilla; she was totally devoted to Hilary and so proud of Jane, Catherine and Polly, whose activities we learnt about in emails that were primarily about SI issues.

Many indexers take up indexing as a second (or even third) career. Drusilla briefly worked in music publishing, travelling to Turkey and Iran to record folk music, but indexing was to be her main career. Initially focusing on medical publications, she prepared her first index in her late twenties, thanks to Hilary becoming aware that a set of conference proceedings needed indexing. Subsequently, her work covered a wide range of subjects. She loved indexing, as she wrote: "for the discipline, linguistic challenges and association with people of like mind – indexers, editors and authors. There can be frustrations ... but these pale into insignificance when set against the personal satisfaction of producing a meaningful guide to the contents of a book or journal".

Within ten years, she had aban-

doned the index cards and shoe-boxes that were still the traditional tools of the trade in the 1970s and become a guinea pig for early versions of what subsequently became MACREX – the first widely available commercial indexing software. **Interviewing** Drusilla for *The Indexer* in 2004, **Geraldine Beare** explained: "for computers to work, software is needed, and before both Steve Jobs and Bill Gates made their spectacular entrances, two people started up an enterprise which enabled the indexing profession to move to the forefront of the technology of the time ... Drusilla and Hilary Calvert".

In early 1981, computers were very expensive, but as Drusilla explained in the same interview: "Hilary wanted an excuse to buy a home computer because these were very expensive at the time. The deal was that he could do so provided he wrote a program to help with my indexing, and this is what happened. The first version was a RAM-based program which used about 8 kb of memory. The data was saved onto cassettes on an ancient cassette recorder. The computer, which cost £2500, was built from a kit. Later on a floppy disk was added for the cost of about £450".

From these small beginnings (the first version was called MICREX), today MACREX version 9 includes a vast array of features, helping indexers to work more efficiently and providing options to suit the exacting requirements of different indexes and publishers.

p7 ↻ Many features were developed in response to users' requests, and much of Drusilla's time was devoted not only to marketing the software and preparing the documentation but also running demonstrations and workshops (in Australia, Canada and the US, as well as in Britain and Europe) and providing a well-used and much-appreciated helpline. As **Joan Dearnley** commented on Sldeline: "Whatever time of day it was, it seemed she was always there, ready to answer my questions and offer guidance". **Priscilla Balkwill** remembers a one-to-one tutorial with Drusilla at the Calverts' London house as "a great joy. She was a wonderful teacher, endlessly patient and encouraging", while **Ann Hudson**, attending a small workshop at the house, noted that "while Drusilla taught us, Hilary took my laptop away upstairs and fiddled around with it until he found the reason why MACREX wasn't behaving properly and sorted it so that it did".

Drusilla and Hilary were very much a partnership, with Hilary attending SI conferences almost as often as Drusilla, and they both always made time to help and support people with indexing queries and issues. As **Maureen MacGlashan** commented on the MACREX international email list: "I have so many happy memories of the two, always the two of you, at conferences and workshops". Similarly, ASI member Janet Perlman expressed what many felt: "You have both meant so much to the indexing community and to MACREX users, and it's hard to contemplate the loss of both Drusilla and Gale [Rhoades – MACREX support in North America] in such a short time span".

Through helping MACREX users for over 30 years, Drusilla came "to understand so much about the workings of the indexing brain – I love helping other indexers by working on sorting out their technical problems and have made many good friends that way".

This interest in the indexer's brain led to a collaboration with her old school and university friend, Professor Joan Abbott, and a **presentation** at the 2006 Durham SI conference that is still talked about to this day.

Drusilla was also generous with her help and advice more widely on technical issues, posting detailed replies on Sldeline on a range of members' problems and contributing articles to *Sldelights*, as well as MACREX tips (which she was still providing in 2017, despite PSP

already putting a stop to many of her activities).

It is difficult to encapsulate in a few sentences Drusilla's contribution to the Society of Indexers. A list of her various positions and committee memberships over many years cannot convey her total commitment to SI and how incredibly hard she worked. She was instrumental in the transformation of the Society into the digital era, embracing this new way of working with enthusiasm. She was very able at seeing a problem and finding a way through it and, more than that, carrying her colleagues with her, often without them realising it. She was absolutely pivotal because of her enormous energy; she really could and did make change happen.

Drusilla cared passionately about the image of the Society and, by extension, the profession, railing against the mushrooming of almost synonymous subject entries in an earlier version of the SI directory and taking advantage of every opportunity to promote the profession. At the same time, she was never afraid to question procedures if she thought they didn't make sense, often putting into words what more reticent members were feeling. She was passionate about the way the Society was run; long-time members will remember her sometimes awkward questions at AGMs, or postings to Sldeline arguing against certain changes. She would never simply oppose change for the sake of it, but would question its wisdom or the way it was being implemented, though she began an email exchange about professional qualifications describing herself as "a really grumpy old person".

In the 2012 debate on Sldeline about the future of the Wheatley Medal, and whether to replace it with an award for 'index-friendly publishers', she argued strongly in favour of retaining it in some form, helpfully suggesting various improvements to its scope and the way it was administered and (inevitably) offering





p8 ☞ to join any working party that might be set up. She reiterated these points in the September 2012 issue of *Sidelights*.

But while it was important to her to make her views known, her criticism was never personal. Her generosity knew no bounds. When Hilary's appointment to a chair in oncology at Newcastle led to the family's move to Blaydon Burn in 1991, the front room of their London house in Rochester Road, Camden, became the Society's first 'office', and for many years after that it was the venue for occasional meetings. She was ever willing to volunteer, despite already doing much more than her fair share. This was typical of Drusilla: "If it's at all useful and if no-one else has come forward, I could help out at the London Book Fair" – only one other person had come forward. The old adage about asking a busy person certainly applied to her, since an email the very next day read: "Am at present in the middle of two days on a string quartet course in the north with the Martinů Quartet, trying to play Janáček 1 (Kreutzer Sonata, based



on horrible short story by Tolstoy) which is dreadfully difficult". Music was, of course, a lifelong passion, and combined with her love of travel, it was sometimes hard to keep up with her; chamber music and cello courses at home and abroad were mentioned in emails, and also skiing trips to France. Among her many accomplish-



ments, Drusilla was a competent and enthusiastic skier and, incidentally, an incredible cook and very knowledgeable about food.

Drusilla would email from London, Blaydon or the Calverts' house in Spain, and quite often from further afield, vividly demonstrating the pace at which she lived life and the chaos into which it sometimes descended, but always described with her characteristic good humour: "I've been hopping between New York to babysit grand-daughter, Spain with family, all over the place including Finland playing chamber music, and am also now secretary of our local little chamber orchestra in Newcastle – all this apart from having an appalling stressful and enormously chaotic indexing project for which I've had to get two helpers ... and getting MACREX 8 honed".

Most of us last saw Drusilla at the 2015 conference in York, when she was already aware of some of the symptoms of PSP, although it was yet to be diagnosed. By 2017 she knew there was little chance of improvement as it gradually robbed her of the ability to continue with the activities she loved so much, especially playing the cello. But it was absolutely typical of her to admit that she was feeling "very upbeat on the whole", looking

forward to a trial she hoped to be enrolled on, and she explained matter-of-factly that "it's the same disease that Dudley Moore had, and interestingly most are musicians of some sort – it's very rare". Her interest in the Society was undiminished. She had been impressed by the first National Indexing Day and the speed with which it had been put together, remarking that "two of my non-indexer friends at least noticed it".

The last word should go to her daughter Polly, who posted on Drusilla's Facebook page on 26 May: "I don't want to remember her as she was at the end, but rather as the fiery, messy, eccentric person that she was for most of her life. A curious mind who loved to travel and learn. A passionate lover of classical music, who got so much joy from playing her cello with friends, listening to music and going to concerts. With Radio 3 as the constant background to our childhoods, Mum seemed to know every piece, every composer and would be moved to tears by the music that she loved most".

• Thanks to input from Jill Halliday and Polly Calvert.

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## Rob Gibson on exploring widely but usually within law

Some careers seem to have a bit of an episodic feel to them rather than following a broadly linear path. Mine is rather like that. Taken as a whole though, it does achieve some form of cohesion, to my mind at least.

My childhood was spent in the small town of Dollar in Central Scotland. With its large nineteenth-century academy, and rugged landscape of hill, castle, burn and glen, it was quite a unique place. As I reached the end of my schooldays though, my thoughts were all of the big city (as represented by Aberdeen, where I was going to study law) and, more immediately, of the highways and byways of Europe.

Inspired by *The Hitchhiker's Guide to Europe* by Ken Welsh (subtitle: *How to See Europe by the Skin of Your Teeth*), in the summer of 1983 and newly turned 18, I made a solo hitching trip through West Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Subsequent summers followed a similar pattern. In 1984, at an isolated border crossing, I walked over the Iron Curtain to Czechoslovakia under the pointed guns of the soldiers in the watchtower above. After five eerie days in Prague, I took a train to Budapest before hitching out through rural Hungary to join the West again. The following summer led northwards to Finland with my then girlfriend, and a year later I set off in the direction of Spain. By that stage, however, the privations of hitching were beginning to outweigh the excitements of it, and thoughts were turning towards the future. The time had come to knuckle down.

After university, I moved to Glasgow to start a traineeship with Neill Clerk & Murray, an old-established law firm with Greenock roots. At the time, Glasgow was going through its renaissance and it was a vibrant place to be. I lived above the office in Charing Cross and I worked very hard, initially on house sales and purchases with occasional spells of criminal court work, and then in the commercial department, which was undergoing a period of growth.

After two years I qualified as a solicitor and was appointed notary public. Soon afterwards the firm opened an office in London and I went to join it. For the first year or two, we commuted south on a weekly basis,

staying during the week at a flat on the river by Blackfriars Bridge.

At offices in Sackville Street, and then opposite the BBC on Portland Place, the workload of corporate law and corporate finance was exciting and all-consuming. I progressed through the ranks and in 1993, at age 28, I became a partner in the firm.

Looking back now, those years seem almost otherworldly. Evenings were often spent at smart London restaurants or the theatre, or at a Hogarthian private members' club in Dean Street. And there was frequent travel to continental Europe and America. We stayed in some extremely nice hotels, and on transatlantic flights became used to turning left rather than right when entering the plane. On one occasion I flew to New York on Concorde. I sat spellbound, marvelling at the roar and the overpowering smell of aircraft fuel as the machine left the ground.

Things were also quite lively on the accommodation front. For several years I lived in a rickety old flat in Shepherd Market, just off Piccadilly. Anthony Powell had lived three doors down, which was a big draw, as I had thoroughly enjoyed his *Dance* sequence of novels not long before. Powell's move to the area had in turn been influenced by the opening scene of the 1924 bestseller *The Green Hat* by Michael Arlen, where Shepherd Market is described as 'a collection of lively odours'. That seemed to me about right. The flat looked out upon the market square, opposite what was (still is) a rustic French restaurant called L'Artiste Muscle, where I often took my dinner.

I then lived for a while at Dolphin Square in Pimlico, built around a large garden square next to the river, which was popular with MPs. Many years later the place gained notoriety following allegations, proved completely false, of sinister goings-on amongst establishment figures.

These were very busy years and by my mid-thirties I was burnt out. Now based back in Glasgow, I retired from the firm at the end of 1999, resolving to use the millennium to do something completely different. My first thought, a secondhand bookshop, was reluctantly



Shepherd Market

**p 10** ↻ discounted on the grounds of extreme unviability. Another area that interested me was heritage tourism and I enrolled on an MSc course at Napier University. This led to an enjoyable summer conducting visitor surveys for Arundel Castle in Sussex, Blair Castle in Perthshire and Newby Hall in Yorkshire. Alongside the commercial questions were some of a theoretical nature for use in my dissertation, and the findings subsequently formed the basis of an academic paper on visitor motivation, co-authored with my tutor, which was presented at an international tourism conference in Glasgow.

Just as this was happening, a rather left-field job appeared in *The Guardian* – in academic publishing, for Palgrave Macmillan, as their campus rep for Scotland and Ireland. I applied and was interviewed in the bar of the Caledonian Hotel in Edinburgh. At the time, there was much less of the centralised control that has become so much of a feature in publishing, and I had a great deal of autonomy as I travelled around Scotland, and over the border to Newcastle, and made monthly trips across Ireland. There were also visits to US sales conferences in Boston and Washington – enthusiastic, almost evangelical, affairs during which traditional British understatement had to be temporarily suspended – and a trip to South Africa to call at universities there. After three years, I was given the chance to join the editorial team and I moved south to work at the Palgrave Macmillan headquarters in Basingstoke. The following year I was appointed commissioning editor for law.

The bedrock of the law list was a long-established textbook series, the Law Masters, that contained several very well respected titles written by prominent authors. These were on regular revision cycles, and one aspect of my focus was on looking to improve and refresh them with each new edition. Alongside these and other textbooks, the list was starting to publish monographs. The Palgrave Macmillan Socio-Legal Studies series had been created just before I started and it fell to me to develop it. Working with the excellent series editor, we published the first book in the series, on same-sex marriage, in 2013. This went on to win the Hart–SLSA Book Prize, the major award in the field of socio-legal studies, a feat that was repeated the following year with the series' second book, on intellectual property rights in African healthcare. Another in the series that was commissioned during that time, on national security and basic freedoms, won the 2017 Peter Birks prize for the best monograph published in law. Separately, I instigated a new monograph series on Modern Legal History, another area where law interacts with wider academic disciplines.

When I started in editorial in 2008, publishing was still considered very much a collaborative effort. Over time, the four main departments (editorial, production, marketing, sales) became more focused on their own particular concerns and much of the old collegiate attitude was lost. In 2014, and following the merger with Springer, operations were relocated from Basingstoke to shiny open-plan offices in the newly expanded Macmillan campus beside Kings Cross. The commute to work took

two hours each way, and after six months I had had enough.

These days the division I was part of no longer exists. It was subsequently renamed Red Globe Press, before being sold to Bloomsbury earlier this year. The law monographs remain with Palgrave, incorporated into the main scholarly list.

After Palgrave I took a maternity cover position as a senior editor on the law list at Routledge/Taylor & Francis. The list at the time had a generous travel budget, and I was able to make extensive trips to visit authors in Australia, the Netherlands and the Caribbean. The schedules were full and long, but evenings and weekends could be used for exploring. Indeed, much of my leisure travel



*The benefits of a generous travel budget: ABOVE Trinidad rainforest, just up the road from the University of the West Indies; BELOW The Concertgebouw, just down the road from the University of Amsterdam.*



over the years has centred around overseas art galleries, classical music and opera and, wherever possible, these diversions have been incorporated into work travel too.

Once the contract at Routledge was over, the time had come for a less structured mode of existence. I had a feeling that indexing might fit the bill. While training I took part-time jobs with a local independent bookshop and at the Winchester College treasury museum; I also managed farmers' markets in various towns across Hampshire and set up a small online bookselling business. Now, two years after qualification, indexing is very much the main focus. A new episode, and so far a particularly enjoyable one.

## Auriol Griffith-Jones sends a postcard from Sturminster Newton



*Blackmore Vale. Photographs by Meyrick Griffith-Jones*

Dorset to most people means Thomas Hardy, and the Jurassic Coast: a favourite destination for tourists, and a place to retire to. But historically it was never a prosperous county and it is still deeply rural. There is not a single mile of motorway and the largest town, Bournemouth, was until the 1970s, in Hampshire.

The Jurassic Coast is only the southern edge – geologically Dorset is so varied. From the heathland behind Poole, one heads northwest-wards up to the chalk downs, and then down into the Blackmore Vale – a mostly clay base with the occasional greensand or limestone ridge. Keep going north and you will meet the southern edge of the Salisbury Plain; all in the space of barely 30 miles.

Our bit of north Dorset is not a prime tourist area, which has its advantages in the summer; on the other hand it means that public transport is limited, and the railway has direct lines only to London or Exeter, all the little branch lines having succumbed to the 1960s axe. In Sturminster the deep railway cutting on the northern edge of the town was filled in, but the original single track line beyond is now a trailway where one can walk past the little 14th-century manor and watermill at Fiddleford to the next old station at Shillingstone, where steam engines can still run on a short stretch of line. Steam thrives in Dorset – one of the most popu-

lar attractions is the Great Dorset Steam Fair which in 2018 held the Guinness world record for the number of steam-powered vehicles.

To the south and east, the chalk hills provide wonderful views. Bulbarrow is the second highest point in Dorset, and Hambledon and Hod Hill were both Iron Age hill forts. Looking back, the Blackmore Vale is a patchwork of little meadows and woodlands, while to the south on a fine clear day one can see the distinctive shape of Portland Bill and the sea.

Sturminster Newton describes itself as the heart of the Blackmore Vale – “the vale of little dairies”. A little market town (pop. 5,000), smaller than others nearby (Shaftesbury, Gillingham, Blandford Forum, Sherborne), it has Anglo-Saxon origins, complete with the remains of a 14th-century castle, a minster church, a 16th-century bridge over the River Stour and the lovely 17th-century mill. The mill still has all its working machinery and has occasional open days every summer when they produce flour. During the first lockdown in 2020, the volunteers used up the whole year’s supply of grain and more, in response to the shortage of bread flour, a phenomenon reported in the *Washington Post*, and even Australia.

Until 1997 the town boasted the largest calf market in the country. When it closed, the whole site was redeveloped to include a really rather impressive

**p 12** ☺ complex including the elegant Exchange arts venue and theatre. A plinth for some years hosted a sculpture by Elisabeth Frink, who lived in a local village, and it has now been taken by a bull's head, one of the creations by Martin Galbevy made entirely of scrap metal and old tools. There is still a Monday market in the square, and there is a good range of mostly independent shops, cafés, old pubs and just enough small businesses and light industry to keep the economy ticking over. It may seem a little old-fashioned, but it's actually perfectly comfortable with the 21st century.

When we first arrived, Sturminster still had its own creamery, built in 1903 next to the railway station, producing award-winning cheese, but when it was hit first by the closure of the market and then closed in 2000, a Cheese Festival was organised to promote local cheeses and other produce. After the inevitable cancellation last year, it will return in September, a highly popular charitable event, raising funds for local charities and organisations.

A few years ago, a modest Literary Festival was begun, inspired by the town's links with Thomas Hardy and William Barnes. Barnes grew up in and around Sturminster; his best known poem is 'Linden Lea', written in Dorset dialect. The slightly younger Thomas Hardy lived for two years in Sturminster while writing *The Return of the Native*, and the poem 'On Sturminster Bridge', and he used the Blackmore Vale as the setting for *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, with Sturminster featuring as Stourcastle. I was ridiculously pleased a couple of years ago to find in Dorchester Museum a display of an illustration from *Tess* as it was serialised in *The Graphic*, which was founded by my great-great-grandfather, and published on the very day of my grandfather's birth.

We came here 35 years ago, looking to buy a house within reach of Bovington Camp where Meyrick had managed to get a posting. We both had most of our family in Somerset and the south-west, so it was nearly home territory. The first, very small, cottage was a classic doer-upper and we did much of the work ourselves, living for periods with beaten earth floors, areas open to the elements and all the concomitant inconveniences, plus small children. After a few years, when Meyrick left the army, we moved all of a mile and a half to a larger version where we still are. It is a mish-mash of a house but with space for his-and-hers offices, out-buildings and a big garden; its pretentious name – Kings Stag House – is belied by the fact that it was for most of its life partly a shop and post office. We have made a lot of changes and improvements, but over a very long timescale this time – the second bathroom took a mere 18 years to materialise.

The village is fairly undistinguished: a few old thatched houses, and two new ones, but mostly small brick cottages and a good many post-war houses and bungalows strung along half a mile of curving road from a crossroads. Off one end, there is a small bridge over the tiny River Lydden, the smallest county bridge

in Dorset with its original plate warning of the penalty of transportation for causing damage to it. At the other end of the road is the pretty, early Georgian, Stock Gaylard house and deer park where for the last 15 years they have held an Oak Fair with traditional wood crafts and demonstrations. The village still has a petrol station/garage/shop, and the Green Man pub had a wonderful facelift two years ago. They have kept going with takeaways till they could finally re-open, with the addition of a lovely coffee shop now. Recently a number of little farm shops have opened, many in response to some of the shortages in the first lockdown, in addition to our 'egg farm' which now sells its own milk, and the local farm which is the only producer of Dorset Blue Vinney cheese.

The last couple of years have been relieved by the acquisition the previous summer of another springer spaniel puppy which Meyrick has trained assiduously as a gundog, and so we have walked every day, come rain or shine, round the local fields and small wood, though the fields tend to flood quite often and the mud can be literally ankle deep. Sometimes we simply had to bend the rules and drive a few miles for our walks to somewhere higher where the paths were passable. But in the spring the little wood is one of dozens of Dorset woods carpeted in bluebells, and home to a family of buzzards and roe deer. As the rules relaxed, we got a few days on the local shoot, using the spaniel to pick up (at which she has proved to be brilliant), and Meyrick has been able to go off to take his increasingly impressive photographs.

It is a gentle, peaceful part of the country, green and wooded, not prosperous but not obviously deprived: a lovely place to live, particularly if your requirements and aspirations are modest.



Sturminster Mill

## see also . . .

What will be “the new normal” and how will it impact indexers? As long ago as January 2015, the think tank The Institute of Public Policy was reporting that self-employment is “the new normal for many” and proposing that the government should be developing more policies to meet the needs of freelancers [Insight workplace platform]. It was calculated that 40 per cent of the rise in job levels in the previous five years had been in self-employment, no doubt as a result of continuing austerity policies and a squeeze on benefits. The self-employed were reckoned to number above 5 million by the start of 2020.

However, the perception is that, under the pandemic, there has been a decline in freelancing. Analysing figures to April 2021, the Statista site reported around 4.35 million in the sector: “self-employment has fallen to levels not seen since the middle of 2015”. But much more working from home has been taken up, and some of it will never return to a designated workplace.

“If anything,” the FreelanceUK website hazarded in April, “Covid-19 has the potential to increase the demand for flexible workers”. It reported that in January “60% of enterprise-owners had plans to increase their usage of freelancers during the rest of 2021. Flexibility emerged as the second biggest driver to use more freelancers (‘to speed up project completion’), behind a lack of skills in-house”. Flexibility and skills have always been among the most penetrating arrows in the indexer’s quiver.

Financial support for the self-employed generally has not been a straightforward matter, and few if any indexers will have been able to advance a cogent argument as to how they might qualify for extra benefits. Happily, there seem to have been few reports of work becoming more fitful or unpredictable during the pandemic. One searches Sldeline in vain for indexers fretting that the



work has dried up. So perhaps we are one of the sectors least disadvantaged by the changes in work patterns.

For home workers, the issues that have most impact are those deriving from particular rather than general circumstances. Who else is in the house? School-age children not permitted to attend classes will have provided a chronic distraction. Now the long holidays are upon us, calculations concerning which have had to be brought forward into what used to be term time. Not all indexers with older dependants – spouses, partners, parents and also disadvantaged children – will have had to recalibrate their options, particularly those concerning time available for work, but some will have found social restrictions adding to the time needed to tend to their charges.

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### *Freelancers are more cost-effective than employees.*

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The way authorities such as HMRC and the government treat the self-employed hardly seems to have changed during the pandemic. But what of clients, and particularly our clients who are also employers? On the Forbes website last December,

Jon Younger argued that “the difference between a freelancer and an employee shrinks to almost nothing when they are both working remotely”. There should be grounds to hope, then, that employees will increasingly identify with the self-employed in such matters as engage their trades unions on their behalf. One of the historic drawbacks of being freelance is our lack of muscle, our inability to march shoulder to shoulder with our peers in making demands for better wages and conditions, and the futility of contemplating the withdrawal of labour.

The swelling of our demographic (with fellow workers who enjoy the advantages that we do not) ought to pay us a dividend, if only psychologically. And while there may not yet be much of a tradition of platform-sharing among indexers (save our own on Sldeline), there are possibilities in this field that might yield benefits for us.

The trend to home working is likely to accelerate the shedding of in-house posts in publishing houses, with more and more editors and others going freelance. We should see that as furnishing opportunity rather than competition. From the employer’s point of view, freelancers are more cost-effective than employees, not incurring all those below-the-line costs that a staff generates. But that’s

p14 ↻ hardly news to indexers.

We've always borne our own overheads. What is changing is that companies are not only noticing the physical changes, they are also seeing the balance-sheet benefits of seeking work from freelancers. Lockdown has been a learning curve for them.

Something that will have hit some employers like a bolt from the blue is that home workers are self-regulating. They work the hours that they determine, not those dictated by union agreements and the regulations of office use. Their travel to and from work is not a factor in their productivity – long before Covid-19, the novelist Val McDermid would self-mockingly crow about her “20-second commute”. Nor do they claim sick pay, holiday pay, maternity benefit and, best of all, they don't expect you to contribute to their pension. You don't have to provide them with an office car and parking space. They don't claim for taxis, entertainment and office expenses. Why the hell would you ever again employ anybody?

The downside of this may turn out to be that lockdowns have produced



Val McDermid – “20-second commute”

a pattern of behaviour that cannot last. When we're not all wearing masks and skirting each other on the pavement, we may feel less committed to some kind of ersatz 'wartime spirit'. We may decide that our diligent productivity has not been sufficiently rewarded and begin to offer clients less bang for their buck. We may indeed, some of us, have found ourselves risking burnout. And the attractions of office life may start

to reassert themselves. People will tire of Zoom meetings. Many will be reminded, when the hospitality sector is back on its feet, of the pleasure and usefulness of taking contacts out to lunch, and indeed of face-to-face dealing. Office romances, presumably at their lowest ebb in the history of humanity, will make a strong comeback (making up for lost time). The 'new normal' may not all be so new.

*The Locator*

# The Indexer

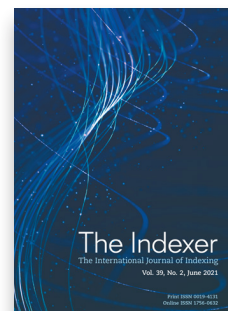
*The International Journal of Indexing*

Articles in Volume 39, Issue 2 (June 2021) include:

*In remembrance: Gale Pinney Rhoades*  
(6 December 1948–31 January 2021)

*The indexing of biography*  
Glyn Sutcliffe

*Virtual professional development for freelance indexers*  
Ann Kingdom



Did you know that the indexes to the journal are available on *The Indexer* website?

Visit [www.theindexer.org/indexes/](http://www.theindexer.org/indexes/)

You can also search for content in the journal via the LUP website site or through Scopus.

## CINDEX™ Tips and Tricks: Repagination

Just when you thought you had finished with your current indexing project . . . the editor tells you they have switched text around or reformatted the book or otherwise made all your carefully-checked page references redundant, and that they need you to fix them. The editor has provided new page proofs.

First and foremost, take a deep breath and clear up whatever you are currently working on – at least temporarily. You will need a clear head to evaluate the new proofs and develop a strategy. Do not rush the preparatory work.

I outline three scenarios you may encounter – from the simple to the complex – but regardless of the extent and complexity of the changes it is always best to carefully check old proof against new. It doesn't matter that the editor tells you that only the numbers have been adjusted, you still need to confirm that textual elements have not shifted also. From a production point of view, the editor is dealing with a fixed number of pages: the indexer, however, needs also to check the new placement of text within those pages. Clues to a shift in text are:

- beginning and ending lines on the old and new proof do not match
- illustrations have shifted position
- the first or last page in a chapter is longer/shorter

If you start to see aberrations such as these, you will need to adjust your strategy. I will revisit this below in the section 'Text reflow'.

The usual precautions also need to be taken: make sure you have a current backup file before you begin. And remember that if anything should go wrong you can use the REVERT TO SAVED function. This is located on the FILE MENU (Windows) or the CINDEX 4 MENU (Mac). This will replace the current index with the last automatically saved to disk version.

### Simple global repagination

In this situation the client has

simply added or removed a page or pages from the front of the book or renumbered the starting text page. For example the first text page may have been numbered 3, but has been renumbered as 1. Or vice versa. The TOOLS MENU//ALTER function will handle this speedily and accurately, renumbering all page numbers in the book.

If everything checks out that only page numbers have been altered, you can proceed to use TOOLS MENU//ALTER to make the required adjustment, i.e. using an offset of -2 for the first situation; and 2 for the latter.

*Hint:* Personally, even when the repagination is simple I still prefer to use TOOLS MENU//EXPAND so that there is only one page reference or range in the Page field of each record. This does not impact the final format of the index and makes checking so much easier.

### Targeted repagination (chapter/section swaps)

In this scenario a few chapters have been repositioned in their entirety. In this case you first need to draw a chart or diagram documenting the swapped chapters as well as the old and new page numbers, the actions you need to take, and the offsets (plus or minus) you will need to make to reflect the new page numbers. I prefer to use a chart, which serves as a checklist of what I have done and what still needs attention, but sometimes it also helps to visualize the swaps with a diagram. The essential elements of this strategy are:

- EXPAND the index so that each page number or range is in its own record
- FIND the records that fall within the page range for the first OLD Chapter that is being repositioned
- Save and name the resulting temporary group (FILE MENU//SAVE GROUP) and record the name of the group (e.g. OLD Chap 7) on your chart

- Return to VIEW MENU//ALL RECORDS

*Hint:* If you wish, you can also label the groups in different colours – this just serves as a later visual check as you are about to ALTER the numbers, but is not necessary.

- Repeat steps 2-4 until all chapters have been isolated, saved and named. Be aware that repositioning a couple of chapters may cause the start page numbers of intervening chapters also to require adjustment
- Open each saved OLD chapter group via VIEW MENU//GROUPS navigating to the required group on the drop-down list

*Hint:* If you wish, place the group in page-order view by clicking on the 1→9 icon in the index toolbar. This makes checking that the correct alteration has taken place much easier i.e. you can predict what the change will be and then confirm it after you have made the alteration. There is no need to return the group to an alphabetic sort.

- Under TOOLS MENU//ALTER enter the required offset (use a hyphen in front of offset [e.g. -40] to decrease the numbers; you do not need to add a + if you are increasing numbers
- UNLabel (if labelling was used) the group to indicate you have altered the page numbers
- Return to VIEW MENU//ALL RECORDS
- Repeat steps 6-9 for each chapter group

*Hint:* Remember to check off your completed actions – as you perform them – on your chart.

### Text reflow (reformatted text pages)

This is every indexer's worst nightmare, bar none. If the size of the book page has been altered, the font or text-size changed, or illustrations or text moved/edited/deleted,



**p16** ➡ then there is little that can be done except to carefully compare OLD proof against NEW proof, identifying and marking the differences. Essentially, what you have is a completely new text, so keep careful track of your hours.

You are already familiar with the content, and you can use some of the strategies outlined above along with additional techniques to help you navigate through these murky waters. That is :

- EXPAND the index (this is absolutely necessary)
- Isolate (FIND), save and name all OLD Chapters

Then for each chapter:

- If the total number of pages in the chapter has remained the same then use ALTER to change the

OLD page numbers to represent the NEW Chapter span. However, if the total number of pages in the chapter has increased or decreased you are best advised to manually review and alter, as necessary, each page number. Regardless of which situation each chapter displays you will need to:

- Label the records in the chapter group and place the group in a page-order sort (1→9 icon on the index toolbar)
- Work through the records, from lowest to highest page number, comparing each entry against the NEW proof, and UNlabeling each record as you either confirm or edit individual page numbers to reflect the new placement, as well as the need to delete existing or to

add new records

It's a little hard to explain, but with old and new proof to hand you will soon discern what needs to be done. As you complete each task to your satisfaction remember to back up the file or make a working copy, as well as checking off each task on your chart.

Lastly, if you have any intuition or premonition that the pagination or text may change substantially you may find it beneficial to practise "judicious procrastination" – a wonderful term I first heard a colleague use many years ago – and it has stuck with me ever since. It may not always play to your advantage, but sometimes it does.

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## Local Groups

### East Anglia

In May, five of the East Anglian Group got together using Zoom to talk about how we approach a text when we begin a new index. The group is currently a mix of experienced and fairly new indexers, so we had a range of perspectives. One early decision is whether to print out the document or whether to work on the screen. That depends on the way individuals like to work, for example in different environments away from the keyboard. Some start with an overview of the structure of the text by looking through the contents pages and skimming through the document. A mind map of key concepts and expected themes can be sketched out to form the basis of a structural approach to indexing, but if you are familiar with the document already (because you may have already been involved in proofreading or editing) this knowledge of the structure of the book is already in your head. The amount of time spent editing an index has a significant impact on profitability and estimates of this as a proportion of the total time spent on the index ranged, even within our small group, between

20% and 50%, although, of course, it varied according to the nature of the book. The American approach is to aim for handling the entries only once, an aspiration which gives everyone a target for improvement.

We compared more structured books and those with a more chatty approach to the reader. We discussed how to track issues that crop up as we index, either on paper or by flagging entries up in the software as we work. Some issues have implications beyond the index so we considered the feedback that may be appropriate for the author or editor when we come across typos or passages that don't make sense.

We considered how to speed up the process of indexing by copying and pasting names and complex terms or by using macros, either purchased from someone else or created yourself within the usual indexing software. We had covered a lot of ground but we still managed a brief final conversation about marketing our businesses before signing off with the hope that in the summer we will be able to meet face to face again.

- Thanks to **Emma Coonan**.

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### Sussex

Six members of the SI Sussex group met by Zoom on Tuesday 8 June. One of us had attended the online ISC/CSI conference in late May and was able to report back on the main topics discussed, which included managing client relationships, index editing, and working on long projects. There had also been useful breakout sessions for subject areas and short networking meetings.

The Sussex group is planning an in-person meeting later in the summer.

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### Three Choirs

Our meetings have carried on in the virtual world on a monthly basis, as has become the norm over the last 18 months. We usually have around 8–10 members each meeting. At present our plans are to continue with virtual meetings every other month with real meetings in between. Our next 'real' meeting will be 22 September at Westonbirt arboretum. It is a great place for a walk and a chat. Members from other groups are invited to come ➡ **p18**

p17 ➔ along. Let me know so I can add you to a list.

Over the past months of the pandemic we have had a few members from other groups drop in for our Zooms from time to time and we hope this continues as life settles back down to normal again. Thank goodness for technology like Zoom that has allowed us to keep in touch.

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## Yorkshire

**Ruth Ellis, Jody Ineson, Ann Kingdom, Alan Rutter, Katie Warriner** and I (and **Paul Machen** whom we've embraced into the fold whether he wants it or not) enjoyed a social gathering on Zoom on 16 June. Ann and I had both recently attended the ISC/SCI virtual conference and Ann had also attended the ASI virtual conference. We talked about what we felt had worked well during these events: in the Canadian conference, I was particularly impressed by the effective chairing of the whole event including the post-presentation Q&As by Lisa Fedorak, and Ann had enjoyed the informal networking sessions – unfortunately, most of these were past my bedtime.

We discussed some things that had jumped out at me from the conference presentations. One was a reminder to cater for those readers who may be less sophisticated or less up-to-date with the current terminology: be generous with helpful cross-references. Another was to consider readers who don't know the exact term for something (e.g. a particular species of plant) but know what type of thing it is (e.g. ground cover). Here it can be useful to provide hierarchical or 'classified' entries in addition to direct entries, to provide multiple access points to the same information. We discussed the dangers of getting carried away with this – people coming to indexing from a background in library work often have an overwhelming urge to classify everything.

As ever, other people have been indexing far more interesting titles than me. Alan's index to a book about forensics (along, he thought, with the book itself) was deemed as including "too much detail" on vetting by the Home Office; amongst the inevitable rash of lockdown cookery books Ruth has been indexing, another cookery book (a Kitchen Grimoire) was written by a witch, no less.

We discussed the value of impending deadlines to focus the mind, whether this was on an indexing commission that didn't quite set the pulse racing, an indexing training test, an ice-skating test, or anything really.

For several of us this meeting brought veritable conversational riches compared with the monosyllabic grunts (or worse) we routinely received from our teenaged offspring at home. Before we knew it, two hours had passed and if we didn't have cups of tea magically appearing by our side we were flagging rather. Our September meeting will be a discussion about subheadings; we will decide closer to the time whether it will be in person, or another Zoom meeting, and I am still looking for volunteers to run this one. Please get in touch if you'd like to give it a go.

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