

Editorial

Twenty-two years ago, pious hopes for a peaceful 21st century were being expressed, both by politicians and by ordinary people worn down by the seemingly constant sounds of conflict throughout the era coming to its end. Yet Wikipedia lists 129 wars across the world since the turn of the century, despite these being years when the very survival of the planet became of primary concern. Mankind's addiction to strife appears to be endemic.

Though Britain has benefitted from the security of being a group of islands, our engagement in warfare overseas has been recurrent. Tony Blair led us into five conflicts, the most by any national leader in our history, monarch or minister. But though our towns and cities have undergone aerial attacks and one-off terrorist incidents, we have proved impossible to occupy.

The last invasion of Britain, little noted now, was into Wales at the end of the 18th century. It was by a French force, *la légion noire*, led by an Irishman called William Tate. The exercise lasted three days and the invaders were repelled at the Battle of Fishguard. Tate and his soldiers were repatriated.

Some SI members will have childhood memories of World War II. Those of us categorised as 'baby boomers' remember how pretty much everything in our childhoods was categorised as either 'pre-war' or 'post-war'. The shadow of war lasts for years. As we watch the carnage in Ukraine, it's impossible to imagine the trauma of becoming a refugee, perhaps having seen members of your own family killed or your home destroyed. How would we, as indexers, pick up the threads of our lives when the bombing is over? Could the publication of books in our homeland resume and if so how quickly? Could we find work in a foreign culture and indeed a foreign language, if we had been accepted for asylum?

It's easy to forget that displaced persons usually have no recourse but to take menial jobs in order to begin to gain an income. Doctors, lawyers, teachers find themselves picking fruit or cleaning offices. Yet some people in the host nations categorise all immigrants as 'an invasion'. Margaret Thatcher spoke in a Granada interview of the fear of Britain being "swamped by people with a different culture". The present system for Ukrainians being accepted into British homes has proved unwieldy and impractical. Imagine filling in a 51-page online-only visa application in a foreign language, even if you still have a working device. How fortunate we are to have our freedom and security.

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Militia – and Welsh women in traditional red cloaks – see off the invaders at Fishguard in 1797.

Sidelights April 2022

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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

While my father was very ill, his big sister Prue sent an email to my mum. She had been revising her memoir *Relish* for American publication and had come across a page in the proofs in which she talked about him:



Jamie was, and is, a wonderful brother and I feel closer to him as I get older [...] Once a successful, if not starry, actor, he gave up the theatre to be a househusband to his highly successful writer and TV presenter wife and wrote a hilarious book about it, *Ironing John*. The quality in Jamie I most admire, and am faintly jealous of, is that he really knows how to live [...] He is intelligent, interesting, talented and funny, but completely lacks self-importance or the desire to be in the limelight. The Leith house has always been full of friends, both theirs and their children's. Now it is full of in-laws and grandchildren. And there is always time for tennis, or sitting around drinking, eating and talking.

No word of that was a lie. A few days later, on 6 April, Dad died. At some point a bit before or after I looked up that page in our old copy of *Relish* and gave it to my younger brother to read. "How did you find the exact place in the book so fast?" he asked. Well, the readers of this column would know the answer to that. There he was in the back, my Dad:

Leith, Jamie (Prue's younger brother) 1, 15, 115, 121, 143–4, 210
adolescence 48, 50–1, 62, 78–9
birth 3
childhood 3–4, 6–8, 10, 23, 26–8
children 141–2
fishing holidays with Prue 291–3, 342–5
and his elderly mother's care 226, 228
and his mother's death 231
knows how to live 341–2

Every index is a series of glimpses of a life, not a summation. Dad would be indexed differently in a book by my mum, by each of his children, or by any of his many friends. I hope some of those books get written. 341–2. Yeah, and *passim*.

Sam Leith

Executive Board Report

The Executive Board last met on 7 February. Plans for National Indexing Day were being finalised and the all-important quiz topic was discussed and chosen. **Ruth Ellis** shared the plans for the online web event and the schedule of topics for social media posts on the day.

As reported in January's *Sidelights*, a series of online CPD events is being developed, building on the success of events at the 2021 online conference. Further progress has been made by **Tanya Izzard** and **Melanie Gee** to plan a combination of Zoom and Sldeline forum discussions, with

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
New Accredited Indexer – MSocInd
Michelle Martin, Littleover, Derby**

topics and themes to be suggested by the wider membership. You will read more about this via *Sidelights*, Sldeline and in Local Groups, so please start thinking about what you would like to see covered in these CPD events.

The marketing review is ongoing. Tanya Izzard reported back with her initial review, which mapped the

Society of Indexers' aims, key audiences, products and services, current activities and media streams. Four key areas have been identified: the society as a whole, the Directory of Professional Indexers, the training course, and National Indexing Day. Further work is planned to discover new opportunities, identify gaps, and develop a schedule and strategy for marketing activities.

Lyndsay Marshall, Minutes Secretary
LM.indexing@gmail.com

Behind the Chair

As Chair I have had the pleasure of attending informal Zoom meetings of ICRIS, the International Committee of Representatives of Indexing Societies. The pandemic has encouraged this group to meet informally online at six-monthly intervals to talk about how things are going in each society, plans for conferences and other initiatives. Despite the Australians having a late night and the west-coast Americans and Canadians an early morning, people from around the world are committed to attending and sharing their news. You may have read about these ICRIS meetings in *The Indexer* (Vol. 40 No 1, January 2022), and perhaps also spotted the article by **Jill Halliday** and **Ruth Pincoe** (Vol. 36 No. 4 December 2018) about the involvement of **Maureen MacGlashan**. Maureen has decided to step down from attending the informal online meetings, and during the most recent Zoom session earlier in April we thanked Maureen for her contributions. **Ann Kingdom**



Maureen MacGlashan

is the SI representative to ICRIS. In the relatively small world of indexing, ICRIS is the place where we can learn from other societies and work together to increase the visibility of indexers. So, my thanks go to Ann for keeping up our input to the group and bringing news of their activities to us. The Berlin conference in October 2022 will be an opportunity for everyone to join the international community, either in person or virtually.

If you're relatively new and not yet met anyone from overseas, this is a terrific opportunity. As a first step into the international world of indexing, you might also like to consider attending the ASI conference at the end of April or the ISC/SCI conference during May. Ann has posted how to register and benefit from the [early bird and members' rates on Sldeline](#).


These conferences will be of benefit to SI members not just from the learning point of view, but because of the networking opportunities. Just as in the UK, overseas indexers are more likely to suggest someone as a possible fit for a client if they have met them, even in the virtual world, and have an idea of their skills and experience. You'll also 'meet' SI indexers in these overseas conferences and raise your profile with some SI members.

Nicola King
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National Indexing Day

The 65th anniversary of the Society's founding was marked on 30 March (apparently it is a Blue Sapphire

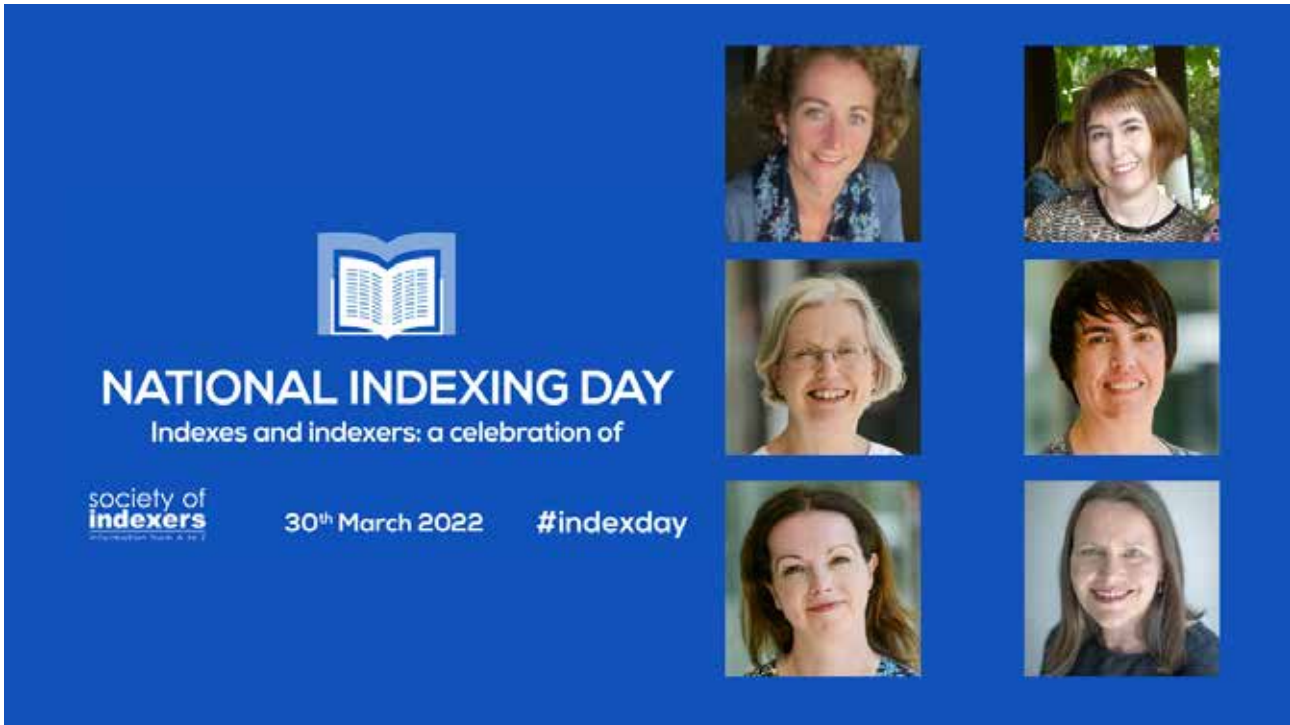
anniversary, in case you were wondering). Although we still had a booking reserved for a London

venue for the date, we had to make a decision about whether we wanted to have a 'real life' event back  **p4**

p3 🔄 in the peak of the Omicron wave. We chose to move our booking on again and hold our celebrations online again. We elected to go with the theme 'Meet the Indexers', so rather than just using

social media for the day, we set up a one-hour live online discussion event, with indexers in conversation with each other about various aspects of indexing. Promotion was based around our usual style, and

we tweaked the colours a bit so that technically the background was 'blue sapphire'. We aimed to be more consistent with our visual approach than we have been in the past. Here is one sample of the promotional material:



Three pairs of indexers: TOP Marian Aird, Ruth Martin; MIDDLE: Nicola King, Ruth Ellis; BOTTOM: Paula Clarke Bain, Tanya Izzard

I am grateful to those who bravely stepped up and agreed to take part in the event, especially once we had determined to record it for future promotional use. We used our Zoom account to host the event (ably managed by **Ann Kingdom**), and it consisted of three pairs of indexers chatting to each other. The first pair aimed to attract potential new members/trainees. They were **Marian Aird** and **Ruth Martin**, discussing how they completed the training course and what the positives of it were, including the improvements that have been made to the latest edition. They also launched the topic of establishing their indexing business and the usefulness of the professional directory. The mid-section of the hour featured **Nicola King** and me comparing the differences when working for trade and academic publishers. This was aimed at editors and publishers, so that they might better understand the factors that impact on index creation

and the issues that we consider when deciding what to include in the index. The final section was aimed at authors and also editors, with **Paula Clarke Bain** and **Tanya Izzard** talking about the process of working directly with authors, what authors need to consider and also the extra complexities of embedded indexing. Attendees included librarians, editors, some indexers from further afield and various other interested parties. Questions could be raised in the chat and the participants aimed to answer them either live on screen or in the chat.

I have the recording of the event, but it requires some editing to shape it into three separate sections. These will be more useful for future promotion and also more likely to be watched the whole way through as they will be much shorter. It may take me a little time to get this task done, but I will load them onto the website as soon as possible.

That hour in the middle of the

day actually gave me a break from tweeting. I tried to be more structured this year with a schedule of topics to discuss during each hour. This generally went well, but of course I also responded to new material that appeared through the day from others. In the hour focussed on promoting the training course, I was pleased to see several of our students popping up to say how they were progressing. When promoting the directory, I shared screenshots of the list of subjects so that potential users could see the range of knowledge we offer. Later on in the day I followed this up with a 'Meet the Indexer' list of twelve anonymous indexer profiles. If you take a look at the [Wakelet story](#), you will see these and you may have fun guessing who they might be. In response to a tweet saying we were the unsung heroes of books, I took the opportunity to share again **Aiden Bell's** recording of 'The Indexer's Lament' written by **Hazel K Bell**.

p4 ↻ Liverpool University Press gave free access to four recent articles in *The Indexer*. **Francis Young** pondered who our patron saint might be, which led to some interesting suggestions. Paula again rose to the task and produced a

new **blog post** listing 22 indexers for 2022 (both current and historical)). **Dennis Duncan**'s book came to the fore during the history hour, and I also shared the list of indexers from Hazel K. Bell's book *From Flock Beds to Professionalism*. **Georgie Bowden**

shared an interesting thread on finding Samuel Pepys' cheese-burying event in an index.

Ruth Ellis
website@indexers.org.uk

'Continental Connections': international indexing conference, Berlin

Booking for the international conference in Berlin (17–18 October) will open by the end of April. At the time of writing, the committee is in the process of finalising the programme details and the registration procedure. All the information will shortly be uploaded to the [conference website](#). Over the next few months, more details about the individual sessions will be uploaded, and this will also be the place to find information about accommodation options.

I hope that we have successfully risen to the challenge of providing a balanced programme that will be of interest to both relative newcomers and old hands who have been indexing for many years. In between the opening address on the current publishing scene and the closing session on the issue of translating the

index (or indexing the translation), the programme will range widely across the world of indexing. The future of the alphabet (and its past), publisher–client relations, embedded indexing, ebooks, indexing unconventional texts, indexing from a sociological perspective and the potential of indexing in intelligent information services – these are just some of the topics that will be covered in the two-day event. We will also be looking at the preliminary results of the survey on finding content in *The Indexer* [see notice below].

The conference more than lives up to its title, 'Continental Connections', with speakers from several European countries (and I make no bones about including the UK here); indeed, intercontinental connections are also reflected, with speakers

from Australia, China and North America.

Above all, the conference will be the first chance for indexers worldwide to spend two days networking with one another face to face since the SI conference in London three long years ago. There is no doubt that online events have played an absolutely vital role in keeping us connected during the Covid pandemic, but as the gradual increases in in-person local group meetings suggests, there is a pent-up demand for more normal social interaction.

At the same time, we recognise that some people will still be hesitant about travelling, so not only will this be the first in-person indexing conference for three years, we are also venturing into new territory in planning a truly hybrid event. ↻ **p6**

The Indexer

The International Journal of Indexing

Have your say...

Forty years on from a similar request in the April 1982 issue of *The Indexer*, we are running an online survey looking at how people find content in the journal. We need your help in evaluating the access points to the vast amount of material in *The Indexer* so that we can determine the journal's future direction.

This is **a survey with a difference**... we want you to enjoy doing it! It includes several fun exercises to help you explore options for finding content in back issues of the journal. These are optional, but we hope you will have a go at them.

Visit <https://www.theindexer.org/> for more information and a link to the online survey.

Contact the Editor, Mary Coe, if you have any questions: editor@theindexer.org

Closing date 31 May 2022

<https://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/id/87>



p5 🔄 The whole programme will be delivered to everyone registering for the conference. (Those coming to Berlin will go through a two-stage registration process, with the second payment being due nearer the conference.) Sessions will be live-streamed from Berlin to online participants, and speakers joining us from their own homes or offices will be projected onto a screen for the audience in the conference venue. As far as break-out rooms are concerned, at lunch- and dinner-time (Central European Time), several topic-based online break-out rooms will be set up to enable remote networking by online participants, while those in Berlin enjoy meals and conversation in nearby restaurants.

The conference venue – the WeiberWirtschaft – is centrally located not far from the Museum Island. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999, Museumsinsel is one of the most important museum sites in Europe. It will be well worth staying on in Berlin for a few days to explore this cosmopolitan and formerly divided city, whose tumultuous history is celebrated in cultural landmarks from the iconic Brandenburg Gate, the Holocaust Memorial and the remains of the Berlin Wall to the amazing reconstructed Reichstag building, the second-most visited attraction in Germany. And only a half-hour S-bahn journey away is Potsdam, where Truman, Churchill and Stalin

decided the future of post-war Europe.

Helping to organise a conference is a great way to get to know fellow indexers better and I have enjoyed being part of this cooperative venture, along with **Caroline Diepeveen** and **Pierke Bosschieter** from The Netherlands, and **Katharina Munk** and **Walter Greulich** from Germany; I regard them all as my friends. Fortunately for me, they all speak excellent English. And for the avoidance of doubt, the conference sessions will also all be in English.

We look forward to welcoming you to Berlin, whether in person or via your computer screen.

Ann Kingdom
conference@indexers.org.uk



The reconstructed Reichstag building



The Brandenburg Gate by night

My Past Life

Jo Bettles learnt from country and town and gown

My childhood was a great mix of countryside and city life. Living on a farm brought with it oodles of space and spare time, and also hard work. Time was spent making dens in haystacks, cycling between villages and beautiful sunrises and sunsets. Very early morning, quiet walks are still a love of mine. I certainly had plenty of fresh air and learnt all sorts of skills, including milling corn into sacks, driving trucks and laying concrete. Some, now entertaining, low points include scrubbing the mud off mangolds in the dark on a freezing cold winter's morning and having to leave our Christmas dinner to deal with a problem on the farm that had cropped up. I was also a member of the local Young Farmers Club with all the associated shenanigans. Here I took part in numerous activities and competitions, from paintballing to flower arranging and drama to basketball. I was also a church bell ringer in my youth,

ringing for weddings and the millennium. And yes, I once did the classic move of not letting go of the rope while going up in the air in the bell tower. Thankfully I was unhurt.

In contrast, I also lived in the city of Leicester. With its fantastic cultural diversity we enjoyed art exhibitions, Leicester Caribbean Carnival, live music and Diwali celebrations. One of my first jobs was in a large sandwich factory. I loved having the opportunity to work with and get to know people from different backgrounds to my own; while making sandwiches of course. I fondly remember the generosity of colleagues bringing scrumptious food in to share around the staff canteen.

During my secondary education I attended Countesthorpe Community College. This was a controversial setting. The college was originally developed as an experiment and was discussed in the national media 🔄 **p7**



Diwali lights switch-on in Leicester



Countesthorpe College: outdoor area with sculpture

p6 ➡ and featured in the television programme *World in Action*. The education was progressive in style, with a focus on student autonomy and informal learning environments. Many parents in the area sent their children further afield to more conventional secondary schools. We didn't wear school uniform and we called teachers by their first names. This style of education wasn't for everyone, but it suited me very well and helped cultivate a lifelong love of learning.

I then lived in Derby for three years while studying for my degree. I absolutely loved Derby and visiting beautiful Derbyshire. I found the history, the landscapes and the culture really interesting. I enjoyed visiting a Gurdwara for the first time and also some of my favourite places like Matlock in the Derbyshire Dales.

My degree was in Education, a subject that still fascinates me. The course included psychology, sociology, and education within business. I had placements in a local brewery, a power station and a month in America. On

my trip to the US, I went to Virginia, Maryland and Washington DC. I visited schools and researched teaching methods for children with special educational needs in comparison to the UK.

As with many other indexers, over the years I have worked in university libraries, public libraries and learning resource centres in further education. I like the atmosphere of libraries; I always think that they not only offer a wealth of information, but also provide a whole range of wider benefits. I've seen them be a place of safety, somewhere for people to belong, a place to grow and somewhere to enhance opportunities.

I worked for several years at Leicester College, and with some truly inspirational students and staff. Many students I worked with were people seeking asylum. Getting to know their situations and their determination was humbling and left a real impression on me. While there I also saw many ways in which disability can be overcome in education through good teaching practices, understanding and adjustments. I took advantage of a wealth of courses on offer including British Sign Language and a Certificate in Further Education Teaching. During my time at Leicester College, I found lots of opportunities and worked on a widening participation project. I worked in learning resource advice, staff training, development work and lecturing roles.

It was while at Leicester College that a colleague told me about a career that she'd heard of as a book indexer. I investigated and was tempted, but it wasn't the right time for me to take the plunge at that point.

In 2001 I began an MSc with the Open University in Social Research Methods. The distance learning course allowed me to study around a full-time job. I found the course very enjoyable and an interesting challenge. I learnt about various qualitative and quantitative research methods, such as participant observation, survey and interview methods. What I learnt on the course helped broaden my knowledge and skills and helped me in subsequent work.

I was able to apply some of the skills I'd learnt when I was offered contract work on projects at De Montfort University. Much of this work involved processing survey data, producing charts and diagrams for publications and helping train voluntary organisations in recording ➡ **p8**

p 7 ➡ outcomes data. This work was home-based, and it was then that I realised that working from home suited me.

I spent several years working for voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations. This work was centred around volunteering and a Stronger Communities agenda. I enjoyed supporting charities and voluntary sector organisations and also helping people find volunteering opportunities. Some aspects that I was involved in included the organisation of a social capital survey, outcomes reporting and hosting a volunteering forum.

In another role for Sure Start, I had access to local authority databases and produced data reports for senior management on outcomes for children. This was to assist with things like funding bids, reporting of outcomes, and freedom of information requests. I found this job exciting. I don't know many people who find spreadsheets and databases as enjoyable as I do.

On beginning the Training in Indexing course, I was asked by an inquisitive colleague, "Can you be an indexer if you're dyslexic, though? What about getting the spellings wrong?" I said that this was an interesting question and described some of the other, less well-known challenges that I had dealt with in work settings. Actually, many dyslexic tendencies can be a big advantage for indexing. I think that creativity and interconnected reasoning are both useful strengths, for example. In fact, I would say that indexing works to other neurodiverse traits of mine. I welcome the need to look at the fine detail and the fact that I can completely immerse myself in an indexing project – although too often forgetting a meal is cooking and burning tea in the process. I wonder if indexers out there have found that indexing plays to their more unusual strengths? Like other indexers, with experience and from picking up tips from others, I have also developed rigorous procedures for checking my indexes.

In the past I have also been fortunate enough to



A working lunch

holiday in France, the Isle of Man, Spain, Greece, Italy, former Yugoslavia, Cape Verde and Ireland. Wanting to communicate better, I took courses in modern Greek and Spanish. My favourite country to visit was Greece with its laid-back way of life and its *Filoxenia* (friendship to a stranger).

Career-wise, I've always done what I enjoyed and haven't grounded myself in a particular profession. With my husband being a farmer, we are rooted at home these days. Now that I have children, indexing allows me to bring my interests and experience together and stretch myself whilst still working from home.

My favourite books to index are ones on ethnographic research, although not the easiest. Indexing ethnography allows me to gain insight into other people's lives and into different parts of the globe. I have also found my ICT experience has been put to good use with indexing. I particularly enjoy embedded indexing and would encourage others who are considering it to give it a go.

When reading through interesting proofs, I feel really lucky to be paid for something I enjoy so much. I am looking forward to developing my indexing skills and discovering more books in the process.

My Neck of the Woods

Linda Sutherland on returning to Shetland

Sometimes life seems to go round in circles. I hadn't expected to find myself again living in the house I grew up in, but that's where events have taken me. My elderly parents had to move into housing equipped for a disabled person, and to help look after them I moved 300–400 miles northwards, taking over the old home.

I had left Shetland in 1970, just as the prospect of North Sea oil bases was dividing local opinion. Nearly forty years later, I found the commu-

nity seemingly also progressing in circles, embroiled yet again in debate about energy-related industry. This time, it's renewable energy.

The islands are well-placed to contribute to the UK's plans to replace fossil fuels, with several developments under way or in the pipeline. Most recent is the Orion Project, a partnership of Shetland Islands Council and other organisations. It hopes to use the experience and infrastructure, gained through hosting the oil industry, as a basis for

developing green hydrogen production facilities.

That's still at the drawing-board stage, but another venture is already yielding practical results. Strong currents in Bluemull Sound, between the northernmost isles of Yell and Unst, drive the turbines of the Shetland Tidal Array, feeding electricity into the local grid. (The isles presently have only locally-generated power, though a connection to the National Grid is in the offing.) There are now plans to develop ➡ **p 9**

p 8 ↻ another array in Yell Sound, between Yell and Shetland's Mainland. (Capitalising is the conventional way of distinguishing the name of the main island from references to the British mainland.)

Tidal energy and green hydrogen are uncontroversial, but the same can't be said of windfarms. Onshore and offshore, these are even more divisive than were the oil-related developments of the 1970s. Offshore ones are mooted, but not yet reality. Objections to them come mostly from the fishing industry – understandably, given that Shetland lies amidst rich fishing grounds, and Lerwick is Britain's second-biggest landing point for catches.

Onshore windfarms are closer to fruition, and far more controversial. At least two are currently moving through the planning process, while a third and bigger project is already under construction.

Developing Sullom Voe radically altered the landscape in that part of Shetland. But, apart from the glow of its flarestack in the night sky, little of it was visible throughout the rest of the archipelago. The Viking Energy windfarm now being built will be much more intrusive; by the time it's completed, turbines with a tip height of up to 155 metres will perch atop many of the highest hills in the middle of the Mainland.

Their visual impact will be much more widely felt. Other concerns include the effect of whirling turbines



A tour boat passing through Noss Sound

on the health of nearby residents, and worries about damage to wildlife, particularly birds. There are also questions about the overall effectiveness of developments that necessarily involve digging up and relocating large quantities of peat.

Effects on landscape and wildlife are particularly concerning for the tourist industry, long an important part of Shetland's economy. Bird-watchers come for the large colonies of nesting seabirds, and for the migrants stopping to rest and feed en route to other places. Archaeologists and historians make for places such as the Neolithic Staneydale Temple, multi-period Jarlshof and Old Scat-

ness sites, Mousa and innumerable other Iron Age brochs, and Viking longhouses. (Three of the latter have been excavated in Unst alone.) More recently, fans of televised wildlife programmes, or of the detective series set in Shetland, have started making the trip north, while special-interest events such as Up Helly Aa, Wool Week, and the several music festivals attract yet more.

Quite a few who come first as visitors end up moving here, and the Covid pandemic seems to be accelerating that trend. Perhaps it has made people more aware of the scope for remote working. That's certainly feasible from Shetland, particularly for the self-employed, though if your work depends on good broadband speeds you need to choose your location carefully. In Lerwick and other population centres speeds are fine for most purposes, but some of the more distant islands and parts of the Mainland have very poor internet access.

There's plenty of opportunity for other types of work too. The private sector includes fishing, aquaculture, renewable energy and marine engineering, a developing spaceport, and a construction industry struggling to keep up with demand. With an unemployment rate well below average, finding suitably qualified people is an ongoing problem. And ↻ **p10**



Scalloway, the old seat of government

p9 ☞ some at least of the new arrivals are retired or about to retire, finding Shetland a comfortable place to settle down.

What draws people? I know of no systematic survey but, anecdotally, lifestyle and a welcoming, supportive community are major attractions. It's a healthy environment, with plenty of fresh sea air, and scope for all manner of outdoor activities. High-quality, locally-produced food is readily available, to buy or home-grown – many properties come with space for outdoor plots and/or greenhouses or polycrubs (a sturdier variant of polytunnels).

It's generally a very safe environment too, notably for children, who can be given more freedom and independence than is typical of the mainland. On my home island, I regularly see older ones out on their bikes miles from home, with no escorting adult. Even in the wicked metropolis of Lerwick, it's common to see them walking to and from school unaccompanied. Shetland isn't immune to the various forms of abuse prevalent in today's societies, but the incidence is mercifully low, as is the crime rate generally. (I slept quite untroubled every night of the week it took to get a broken front door lock fixed.)

The normally busy sports and entertainments calendar is showing clear signs of revival now, following two years of Covid restrictions. If you prefer participation to being entertained, there are lots of ways of getting involved, including clubs for just about any form of sport or hobby, drama groups, formal and informal music-making – and, of course, Up Helly Aa.

Outside of the isles, most people associate Up Helly Aa with the big Lerwick event, held on the last Tuesday in January. That one has grown to the limit of what the town's halls and other venues can cope with, and consequently it's difficult for newcomers to find a way of participating, other than as spectators. Go to one of the rural districts, though, and it's likely to be much easier to join in the – arguably greater – fun of its local Up Helly Aa.

These are held on various dates from January to March. They follow the same format as the Lerwick one, beginning with a full day of engagements for the presiding Guizer Jarl and his squad of Vikings. In the evening, they and a replica Viking galley lead a torchlit procession of other squads, all in fancy dress. The procession culminates in the tossing of torches into the hapless galley, either at a bonfire site or, in one or two instances, when the vessel has been set afloat on the sea.

Then comes a full night of dancing, eating and drinking, interspersed with entertainment provided by each of the squads in turn. From experience, I can confirm that planning and preparation of a squad's contribution is at least as much fun as the actual Up Helly Aa night itself.

Are there downsides to island life? Yes, foremost among them the cost of living, with transport costs boosting the price of most things. I paid almost 173p per litre for petrol the other week, when mainland folk were horrified by prices in the 161–163p range. Fuelling a home is similarly costly, whether it's by oil, electricity, or LPG (there's no natural gas supply).

That's if you can find a home. There's an acute shortage of housing, sending prices rocketing beyond the means of local young folk. Troublesome knock-on effects include

difficulties in recruitment, to medical services and construction trades especially.

Travel to the mainland is also expensive. Nevertheless, many of us take at least one flight or ferry journey southwards each year. With few of the major retail outlets present, shopping locally offers only limited choice, particularly for clothes and white goods. Online shopping fills some of the gap, but many choose to supplement that with a high-compression bout of retail therapy, either on its own or in combination with a holiday.

On balance, though, would I choose to live anywhere else? Not now. Time and experience have largely cured me of the itchy feet that take many of Shetland's young folk away for at least part of their lives. Today, the benefits easily outweigh the disadvantages, especially when I realise that some of the experiences Shetland offers are unique. Where else, after all, would an otter join commuters on a local car ferry? Or another ferry change course to allow orcas safe passage across its normal route? And where else, I ask you, could I watch from my garden as one of the world's few semi-submersible vessels unloads a tank probably bigger than the house behind me?



Chinese semi-submersible Xiang Yun Kuo, ballasted down to allow a large tank to float off its deck into the care of waiting tugs.

see also ...

Every publication needs to maintain a house style and *Sidelights* is no exception. Our current 'House Style Guide' is, we intend, a pragmatic document, designed to promulgate justifiable conventions that enhance the readability of our articles.

We are a different beast from, say, *The Indexer*. That august publication may be characterised as a journal and indeed it does generally follow the style practices of the journal tradition. *Sidelights* is more in the nature of a newsletter. We are the less formal of the Society's publications, though contributors sometimes need to be reminded of this, their diligent footnotes and academic citations being subbed out as extraneous in our context. In that we are closer related to Fleet Street than to academe, we follow the practices of newspapers rather than those of theses.

Some of our conventions are grounded in objective assessments of what works better on our pages. Others are more subjective; where a choice has to be made between one style or another and there is no compelling logic behind either, the editor's taste may be indulged. For instance, his fancy that such conjunctions as 'whilst', and such prepositions as 'amongst' and 'amidst' are highfalutin versions of 'while', 'among' and 'amid' spurs him to pounce on them in submitted copy. This may be influenced by his East Midlands upbringing, where convention required 'whilst' to distinguish the sense from the local use of 'while' as a synonym for 'until' – "she were there while dinnertime" (yes, really). Such distinctions are not necessary in the argot of indexers. The versions without the 'st' suffix are also favoured by newspapers.

With names ending in 's', following *The Associated Press Stylebook* (as newspapers generally do), the editor prefers an end apostrophe with possession to an additional 's'

after an apostrophe: Dickens' novels. This may provoke apoplexy in those who insist on Dickens's novels. However, the editor ventures that, while "keeping up with the Joneses" is universally observed, "keeping up with the Joneses's car" would be the proverbial car crash, either written or spoken.

Spelling variations can provoke indignant exchanges of view, especially where variety is not confined to American departures from British English. No one in the UK would want to mimic such US versions as 'traveler' or 'jewelry', but there is less agreement about, say, conjugating the verb 'benefit'. Those who have read this quarter's editorial may have noted 'benefitted' in the second paragraph. This accords with the Grammarist website's contention that "the double *t* is the preferred spelling in British English". On the other hand, *Hart's Rules* expounds a finding that "verbs that do not have stress on the final syllable do not double the consonant": hence, 'benefiting'. But this being the English language, every rule has exceptions. Dictionaries that disallow 'benefitting' nonetheless list 'pedalling' but never 'pedaling', even though the stress is on the first, not the final syllable. You pays your money and you takes your choice. Two aspects of 'benefiting' repel your editor: it looks decidedly American, and it looks weirdly as though it should be pronounced 'benefighting' (as 'writing' is said as 'wrihting').

In many outlets, verbs ending in '-ize' are preferred to '-ise', not only in American English but also in British English that follows Oxford practice. Naturally, there are exceptions: no one spells it 'surprize' and even Oxford advocates 'analyse' rather than the blameless American 'analyze'. However, UK newspapers again depart from academe and prefer '-ise', and hence so does *Sidelights*.

At least this saves us confronting the possibility of ↻ p12

The Indexer

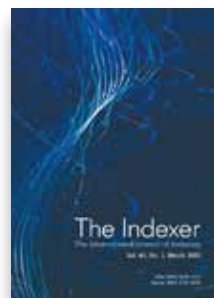
The International Journal of Indexing

Articles in Volume 40, Issue 1 (March 2022) include:

The book index: child of letters, tool of knowledge, weapon of deconstruction
Michele Combs

Indexing The Indexer, Part 1. Lost in the forest: navigating the journal's indexes
Ann Kingdom

Modern US standards for indexes of documents
Pilar Wyman and Judi Gibbs



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

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p11 ➡ 'rewriting' the title of Kenneth Clark's legendary television series, *Civilisation*.

Quotation marks are another fraught subject. *The Indexer* follows journal practice of single quote marks.

intent is clear. Mark Twain's objection to the casual deployment of the exclamation mark is unanswerable: "It is like laughing at your own joke". To do so is not good manners. Multiple exclamation marks compound the offence.



Newspapers use single quote marks when summarising what someone says but not quoting exactly

Many publishers of fiction as well as academic texts agree. *Sidelights* prefers the Fleet Street convention – observed by all British national newspapers save in this case those of Associated Press (the *Daily Mail*) – of double quote marks. So-called 'scare quotes' appear within single quotation marks, as do references that offer exemplification – as in 'benefitting' above – and quotes within quotes. Some may object that they have indeed seen single quote marks in the papers, particularly in headlines, but this follows a further convention. The press use single quotes when what is quoted is not verbatim but a summary of what has been said (particularly in headlines as the illustration demonstrates), double quotes when the quotation is exact. In *Sidelights*, our quoting is always scrupulous (needless to say) and hence within double quotes.

But there is a practical argument for double quotes too. Not every SI member enjoys 20/20 vision – indeed, your editor does not. Single quotes, especially in our chosen font, are not easy to detect. Double quotes fulfil a useful function, waving not drowning.

Elsewhere in the punctuation minefield, the exclamation mark is much favoured by occasional and informal writers, but it has no place in 'proper' writing except with an actual exclamation: "Zounds!"; "Never!"; "Surprise, surprise!". The loose use to point a pleasantry or an irony is not the mark of professional writing; if the writer fears the possibility of being misunderstood without this visible prompt, the only respectable remedy is a rewrite until the

That's the kind of overkill one sees in Christmas round robins: "we went in the hotel pool and Jemima managed three lengths!!!!" It's enough to make one wish Jemima had drowned.

The so-called interrobang is a widely recognised piece of modern punctuation, though not readily available on the average keyboard. Its 'proper' appearance may be observed in the accompanying illustration, but it is frequently keyed for ease as ?! or !? or !?! or, if you really must, !?!?! *ad nauseam*. This is not a piece of punctuation that you would expect to see in a professional publication to be printed and distributed widely. It's more apt to show up in emails, the aforementioned yuletide ➡ p13

?	?	?
Calibri	Times New Roman	Segoe UI
?	?	?
Georgia	Verdana	Courier New

The interrobang in various fonts

p12 ↻ reports and other kinds of informal communication. Needless to note that, if exclamation marks are excised from submitted copy for *Sidelights*, interrobangs are fumigated and garrotted, the perpetrator then added to a list of those only to be invited to contribute again in times of dire necessity.

A further punctuational requirement may perhaps be the editor's own (but we argue that he is entitled to his little ways). He cleaves to the notion that the full stop or its equivalent ought to be the final punctuation in a sentence, including sentences that are or contain parentheses and quotations. Thus, just above: "his little ways)", though of course that formulation is now altered by no longer being the end of the sentence. If it were, he argues that it should end like this: "his little ways)". Here

is another instance: "I asked him 'Are you quite well?'". In this example, the full point ends the whole sentence that includes "I asked him". If the question mark were the only concluding mark, the words "I asked him" would have been excluded from the sentence, like a dog shed from a pack. The editor suggests that elevating the full point to the role of last things in all circumstances has a neatness and a logic that is persuasive. Not all will agree, but then determining house style is not a democratic exercise.

Despite other departures from Oxford style, as promulgated in *Hart's Rules*, we favour the Oxford comma. Perverse? As Emerson famously observed: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines".

The Locator

Local Groups

East Anglia

Seven members of the East Anglian Group met over Zoom in February. Our discussion focused on how to decide whether to take on a piece of work or not, even if it is outside your normal subject area. It is important to look at the text itself, even in draft form, before agreeing to do the work. The writing style and the audience for the book both influence how easy it is to get to grips with the content. We felt that, provided you understand the content, it is feasible to index a book but the less familiar you are with the subject and the terminology, the more time it will take. It may be worth putting in the extra time, if it is a field where you would like to build your experience and extend your own skills.

We plan to meet face to face for a peer review in May or June at a familiar central venue, the Angel at Bury St Edmunds. We can go for a walk, either in the town or in the Abbey Gardens, if the weather is good.

Carol Maxwell
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Three Choirs

Normally we are quite lucky with the weather but not this time. Eight of us met at Slimbridge Wetland Centre in Gloucestershire for coffee before beginning our tour



around the site. Showers were blowing through quite quickly and we seemed to dodge them for a while. The kingfishers were building their nests so we stopped there to see if we could get a glimpse. It was on the walk back to the main building and lunch that the rain caught up with us and we got kind of soggy. It was still a good day despite the weather.

We will carry on with Zoom in between the real meetings as members enjoy the extra get-togethers. Our next real visit will be to Tintern Abbey on 15 June. More details to come later.

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Yorkshire

Five of us (**Joan Dearnley, Ruth Ellis, Ann Kingdom, Katie Warriner** and me) met for a Zoom catch-up on 1 April. Indexing topics discussed included: the benefits of deadlines to avoid perpetual procrastination and how we approach long deadlines; the unexpected pleasures of indexing books outside one's specialised areas; and whether anyone has rejected a book because it was too badly written or just plain boring (no-one had, although occasionally it has crossed my mind). Being hot on the heels of National Indexing Day, this, too, was discussed and Ruth and Ann were congratulated for a job well done. Other topics included (predictably) Covid, hybrid working, and (surprisingly) football. The last half hour turned into a bit of a mothers' meeting, where three of us compared notes on navigating our teenagers through their GCSE exams and beyond, matching parenting style to their learning styles, and (sniff) knowing when to let go.

By way of further upcoming social meetings, the 'Sheffield branch' will be returning to the Whirlow Hall Farm café on Wednesday 20 April at 10:30, and with a bit of luck the group will have our long-awaited trip to Shibden Hall, Halifax on Wednesday 8 June. All are welcome: keep an eye on Sidelights for details.

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