

# Slidelights

ISSN 1363-9854

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

## Editorial

Why shouldn't anyone compile a book index by the simple means of a search engine? With this foolish question, having been actually asked of us or having been imagined and rehearsed by us, we indexers have comforted ourselves ever since the dawn of Information Technology. We have confidently and perhaps a touch patronisingly explained, either to an actual interlocutor or to an imagined one, that search engines, smart though they may become, will never furnish the subtlety, the discrimination, the sophistication, nor replicate the erudition, the expertise, the wit of the human indexer.

Equally have we scorned the supplementary question: why shouldn't a computer compile an index? We have offered a similar response. It boils down to the readily comprehensible proposition: computers will never enjoy the capacity, the complexity, the discernment of the human brain.

Alas, we may have betrayed a measure of complacency. The

astonishing advances in Artificial Intelligence, breathlessly reported this year, suggest that the range of activities that primarily exercise the brain is rapidly being annexed by the computer. No conceptual challenge, however arcane, is safe from the computer's willingness to appropriate it. Can we doubt that an exemplary index will not long remain outside the computer's grasp?

The ground that is shifting beneath our feet is the notion that computers cannot comprehensively be taught to function in the same way as human brains do. It seems that we must learn to accept that they can. And just contemplate the guarantee that a computer can offer which, by definition, a living indexer cannot venture: the absence of human error.

Ah, you may argue, but think about the colossal damage wrought by computers in public services in recent years: the errors in NHS management and diagnosis, the appalling scandal wherein hundreds of local

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post office managers had their lives ruined because a computer program declared them to be crooks. Awful as these are, one must counter that these are not computing errors; rather they are human errors, mistakes and misjudgments by programmers, by senior managers and by others too gullible or idle to question rogue results being thrown up by their systems.

So what can we do? Clearly we cannot Cnut-like attempt to repel the tide of history. Computer-generated indexes will start to appear. But we shouldn't just roll over and play dead. We must simply strive to be better. We must produce indexes that, set beside artificial ones, display resourcefulness, light-footedness, sensitivity and an understanding of the potential readerships with which AI cannot hope to compete. Or is that a pious hope?



*Sidelights* October 2023

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*Sidelights* is the quarterly newsletter of

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It is issued free of charge to members. The Society wishes to assert that all opinions expressed are those of the contributors.

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

**January 2024 *Sidelights* Copy deadline**  
**Friday 5 January 2023**  
(for electronic distribution mid-January)

## Presidential Musings

Nice to see so many of you, albeit virtually, at this year's conference; you in Leeds, me in my untidy study in London, stumbling through my traditional well-meant inanities.

Nice, too, to see **Paula Clarke Bain** posting the progress of the conference on Bluesky, the social media platform to which all but the Worst People In The World seem to have been migrating from Twitter in ever increasing numbers.

Is Twitter (or X, as I want to refuse to call it) a thing for you? I suspect the range among indexers is more or less that of the population in general: a few heavy users, many with a presence, a majority who wouldn't touch it with a barge pole. It catches my attention in these Musings because it seems to me to bear at least obliquely on the interests of indexers: it's a way of organising information. And even if you don't use it, its vast reach has given it real power in the world.

Leaving aside Elon Musk's well-documented enthusiasm for pro-Putin talking points and Interacting with nihilistic alt-right trolls (this isn't a political column), the information-organisation aspects of his changes to the site are alone enough to have me on the verge of packing it in.

Item: blue-tick verification, and hence visibility to other users and apparent authority, is now something you buy with a monthly subscription. In indexing terms, you can pay to be promoted from a passing mention to a headword.

Item: engagement-choking. There's compelling evidence that the self-declared "free-speech absolutist" is quietly and arbitrarily rendering less visible those tweets that criticise him personally or criticise causes he favours. A thumb on the scales. In indexing terms, he's quietly removing helpful sub-heads or cross-references and, in the odd case, locators.

Final item, and this is the one that seems to me the last straw. Twitter's a newswire of sorts. It's great for seeing links to breaking stories and interesting articles. But now, if someone posts a link, it appears in the tweet as without any sort of headline or other text to indicate what it's about. You click blind. The closest analogy I can think of is an index with all the locators in place and all the headwords Tippexed out.

So: see you in the other place?

Sam Leith



## Society News

### Executive Board Report

The Executive Board met on 25 August. The final plans for SI's conference on 26 September were reviewed.

**Ruth Martin** shared the findings of the survey of students and new professionals which took place

in June [see p8]. The results will shape the resources and support offered by SI in the future. As a first step, **Rachel Gee** requested budget resources for an additional longer practice text for students, and this was approved by EB.



p2 ↻

In her new role as CPD Director, **Melanie Gee** provided a report on a CILIP Knowledge Exchange event about Artificial Intelligence which she attended online in June. She also shared information about the survey on pre-press suppliers currently being conducted with the help of **Ann Kingdom** and **Tim Ryder**. She noted some CPD suggestions from EB and will take them to the CPD committee in due course.

**Tanya Izzard** shared further

information about an advertising campaign planned for autumn 2023. EB also made plans to renew and strengthen links with Publishing Training Centre and CIEP. At the recent CIEP conference, information on SI's training course was added to the delegate packs, and SI contributed a raffle prize.

**Lyndsay Marshall** has joined the BSI committee related to indexing, and the international working group focused on ISO 999. The group has

been meeting monthly since July.

**Nicola King** reported that she would be attending the T.E. Lawrence Society conference at Magdalen College, Oxford, at which **Hazel Bell** would be presenting a paper about indexing [see Behind the Chair below].

The next meeting of the Executive Board will be held by Zoom on Monday 16 October from 13:00 to 15:00. As mentioned at the recent conference, the board is looking for new members to join from the AGM in November. Members can sit in on our Zoom meetings to find out how we work and to meet the current members. If anyone would like to join, please contact **Paul Machen** in the office at [admin@indexers.org.uk](mailto:admin@indexers.org.uk).

*Lyndsay Marshall, Minutes Secretary*  
[LM.indexing@gmail.com](mailto:LM.indexing@gmail.com)

## CONGRATULATIONS TO

**New Accredited Indexer – MFSocInd**  
**Nicola Green**, Frome, Somerset

**New Advanced Member – MFSocInd(Adv)**  
**Susan Penny**, Tobermory, Isle of Mull

## Behind the Chair

My stint on the Executive Board is drawing to an end. Oxford has booked my time on the Executive Board of the Society and recently provided some personal and indexing coincidences. I joined the board at the Oxford Conference in 2017 and after six years it is time to step away and let others see the society into the future. I'd like to thank everyone who has been on the EB during my stint – you've been a great team and do so much to keep the society running.

However, new blood is needed and if YOU could join EB, do let us know. If you would like to know more, you can contact **Paul Machen** in the office and he'll point you in the right direction, or you can contact any EB member. To try before you buy, members are welcome to sit in on EB Zoom meetings. If you haven't seen an announcement, ask Paul.

With the glow from this year's conference fading into the autumn mists, we really do need someone/some people to take on organising next year's event. Previously, there has been a conference committee with one person reporting to EB. I think that's a good model, because it

moves the responsibility for day-to-day management of the event away from EB. This year the EB organised everything, and alongside our other responsibilities it was a big commitment. We're happy to talk with anyone who might be interested in picking up this important role.

Back to the Oxford thread. For both the 2017 conference and the T. E. Lawrence conference at the end of August this year, I stayed in the Lincoln College student accommodation at the Mitre in Turl Street. Back in 2017, it was showing its age and was decidedly creaky and sticky. Since then, it has been refurbished and offers a high standard to both students and guests. If you need [somewhere to stay in central Oxford](#), you can do so out of term-time – note that [the rooms do not have TVs and they do not provide breakfast](#).

You will find **Hazel Bell's** paper on her work indexing for Lawrence biographer Jeremy Wilson, and my summary of the event, in a future edition of *The Indexer*. Recordings of the papers are [available online](#) – Hazel starts about 40 minutes in. If you want just Hazel's talk it is [here](#).

Hazel was kind enough to invite me to the speakers' dinner after the conference, as her first choice of guest, **Geraldine Beare**, had to make her way home before the start of the train strike on 1 September. We dined by candlelight in 17th-century rooms, eating griddled pears with goat's cheese; roast duck breast with figs, potatoes, beans and carrots; and cheesecake. Two wines were served, and the meal concluded with coffee and mints. Magdalen College has a little [exhibition](#) about TEL running until 13 December 2023 (charges may apply to visit the college – check before you go – and it is up some very steep stairs) and [the exhibition is also available online](#).

A further Oxford coincidence is that Hazel's late husband, Colin, was a student at Lincoln College in the 1950s. He studied chemistry and his notebooks now form part of the [college archives](#). My final Oxford coincidence occurred in Blackwells bookshop. I ordered Scott Anderson's book on TEL to collect the day after the conference. The collection desk is now at the back of the ground floor and beside it sat a table piled with newly ↻ p4

**p3** ↻ re-issued copies of Barbara Pym's novels in paperback, and the biography of Pym by Paula Byrne, which I have wanted to read for some time. So, I also bought the biography of Pym, who indexed for the International African Institute, and a copy of *No Fond Return of Love*, which opens with the main character attending an indexers' conference, although in Derbyshire, not Oxford.

Hazel Bell, as a member of the Barbara Pym Society, editor and indexer of their journal, and editor and contributor to *The Indexer*, has featured Barbara Pym in our



publications and promoted indexing in theirs. She also compiled the [index to Pym's novels](#), where you can see how she tackled indexing multiple fictional works. Perhaps the next generation of Pym readers will be inspired to investigate further the dark art of indexing, and turn to biographical indexing in their turn. Pym, of course, studied at Oxford, and it is in the background of her books. I haven't started the TEL biography yet, but I have finished the Pym.

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

## Conference: 'Bringing the Outside In'

### Madelon Nanninga visits Leeds

2023 saw the Society of Indexers' first in-person conference since the Covid-19 pandemic, so it naturally attracted many who were eager to (re)connect with their colleagues after waiting four years. There were multiple newer indexers who became aware of the profession and/or started their training during lockdown, so it was interesting to meet both students and experienced indexers. Most of the participants came from the SI's homebase, the UK, but the conference also attracted ICRIS representatives and society members travelling from continental Europe and even Canada.

This year's conference was hosted in Leeds. I travelled from the Netherlands to attend, so I was pleased with the additional options on the day before the one-day gathering. **Ruth Ellis'** guided walking tour of the city centre was an indispensable part of the experience, allowing me to get a sense of the history of the city. I even heard multiple local indexers proclaim that they had no idea of the richness of Leeds' history before they encountered Ruth's stories. The tour started on City Square, which houses many impressive buildings built to display the city's importance and wealth. We met in a wooden art installation called 'Making a Stand',

which was inspired by the forest that had been there long ago. The installation is part of 'Leeds Year of Culture 2023', an unofficial event that the city organised after losing the bid to be the European capital of culture because of Brexit. It was great to see and hear about the city's culture during our walk. Ruth mentioned the Kaiser Chiefs' hit *I Predict a Riot*, whose lyrics refer to the street we were walking on, and showed us the start of the 2014 Tour de France,

which can still be seen on the cycling lane and inspired a lot of cyclists to make better use of their bikes, as well as various museums, music venues, and pubs.

Leeds' commercial history was equally interesting and well-represented on our walk. Historically a major trading town, the city grew rich exporting woollen cloths, textiles, and agricultural commodities. We went inside the beautiful Corn Exchange, one of

↻ p5



Inside the Corn Exchange. Pic: Madelon Nanninga

**p4** architect Cuthbert Brodrick's many architectural masterpieces in the city. Afterwards, we passed through Kirkgate Market, a historical covered market which now contains 800 stalls, and saw the tiny stall which housed the original Marks and Spencer. We looked at the city's beautiful arcades, shopping streets, and eventually St Paul's House, an exquisite nineteenth-century warehouse in Moorish style.

For those of us who still had energy left for more walking, Ruth continued the tour to the canal that is located *under* the train station, after which a few of us had drinks and talked at a nearby café. Monday



ABOVE AND BELOW: *The Terrace.*  
Pics: Paul Machen.

night's dinner at Indian restaurant Nawaab was lovely as well. There were significantly more indexers present than there were on the walk, so it was a great opportunity for socialising and enjoying fine food.

The actual conference happened next day. The venue, The Terrace, is located on the fifth floor of a luxurious and conveniently located office block. We were treated to fresh fruit, big mugs of coffee and tea, a fridge full of fizzy drinks (which, Ruth reminded us, were invented in Leeds), multiple offices, and a nice outdoor area where we could enjoy our lunch in the sun. It was a perfect setting for the day.

As people trickled into the venue, we were handed our name tags, pens and folders featuring the SI logo, and some cards that we could use to write down information about the people that we met. **Melanie Gee** encouraged everyone to talk to four people they had never met yet, claiming that the cards have magic powers that allow even introverts to find the courage to step up to someone we don't know. Talking to new people and finding out about their indexing interests and experience was a lovely way of starting the day, and I was able to connect some faces to names I had seen online.

The conference was opened by honorary SI president **Sam Leith**, who joined us via Zoom. In his short talk, he emphasised the importance of the SI in setting a gold standard for indexing, also mentioning that indexes were "one of the great joys in my life". Sam pointed out the value of conferences, which are great ways

both to socialise and to keep up to date with indexing standards.

### Client Carousel

Afterwards, **Tanya Izzard**, **Nicola King**, Melanie, and Ruth led 20-minute group discussions in a 'Client Carousel', in which we discussed working for academic authors, academic publishers, trade publishers, and book packagers (or "pre-press suppliers"). Participants were asked to step out of their comfort zones and go to two discussions that discussed clients that they were not yet familiar with. Melanie's presentation on packagers/pre-press suppliers was very popular. Many of us admitted that we were hesitant to work with them because of the low pay that they offer. Melanie, however, pointed out that many indexers *do* work for them, and that there are some benefits from being on their email lists, most important of which is the steady stream of work that they offer. Melanie read excerpts from the standard emails that they send around asking for indexers' availability and shared some of the results from a survey that will also be published in *Sidelights*. An important takeaway from this discussion was that negotiating on price usually doesn't work (though there are a few cases where colleagues managed to get a better fee), but negotiating on a larger timescale usually works. Packagers are rarely aware of best indexing practice and don't want to argue with authors, so you can expect having to make corrections that are "unusual and go against your training".

Academic publishers, Nicola argued, work very differently. They allow you to write your own index, oftentimes offering minimal or no style restrictions. They appreciate receiving queries, and follow up with good answers. Furthermore, they offer a generous timescale from the start. Nicola shared a useful list of the different kinds of academic publishers, as well as specific ones, and the types of documents that typically require indexes. We discussed emailing them to introduce



p5 ➡ ourselves and letting them know that we were available for work. An advantage of working with publishers and packagers is that they offer repeat work, the lack of which is the biggest disadvantage of working for authors.

**Editing an index**

For the second session, we split up into two different groups, one of which was led by Ruth and was called 'Doing it Again: Indexing New Editions and Formats'. I signed up for the other option, 'Editing an Index', led by Nicola. In an intimate group consisting of thirteen indexers with different levels of experience, we talked about the editing process and shared what strategies worked best for us. Unsurprisingly, none of us was able to do all the editing while going through our first pass of the book, but the amount of time we spend on the editing process differs from person to person. Nicola told us that, when she was first starting out, she would spend roughly the same amount of time on indexing

and editing, pointing out that this was a bad distribution of time. Many indexers concurred that they spend less time on editing, but several people admitted that that's precisely how they do it.

It was interesting to hear tips and tricks that seasoned indexers apply, such as adding "dp" to entries that need to be double-posted. In other ways, our indexing processes differed from each other. Some are likely to ignore terms that they think are unnecessary and later realise that they should have added them to the index. Others pick up everything and delete what wasn't important at the end. Nicola said that she doesn't remove entries at all, but rather labels them in SKY and doesn't generate that label in the index output. When the author asks for those terms to be included, the only thing she has to do to make all the entries reappear is remove the label. We had interesting discussions about adding the names of living persons that want to see themselves in the index; adding notes-to-self, a specific case study from one of Nicola's projects; and

continued statements. In the end we did an exercise editing an existing index; it was interesting to see the different mistakes that we found, as well as the different solutions that we came up with.

**Indexing different formats**

Session three consisted of three 20-minute presentations on indexing specific kinds of texts. Melanie started off with talking about her experience indexing *The Letters of Seamus Heaney*, an immense project with significant time and space restraints. Melanie admitted that she had to learn how to index a collection of letters while also having to emulate the style of another index that belonged to a similar book. She was expected to create multiple indexes and settled on working on the index of works in the evenings, which was something she never had to do before. Even though the project caused her a lot of stress, she would gladly do it all over again. After the talk, participants could have a look at Melanie's index and compare it to the index she was asked to emulate. ➡ p7



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**p6** ➔ Then **Sue Goodman** talked about indexing heavily illustrated books and gave some useful tips on how to tackle them. She talked about the many different types of illustrations, as well as the importance of differentiating between two illustrations that have the same title but are actually two versions of the same work. She suggested using the page number of the caption for the locator instead of the illustration itself. Sue also talked about creating main headings for larger topics, such as 'pendants' in a book on jewellery, and the option of arranging biographical information chronologically instead of alphabetically.

Closing off this session was Ruth talking about children's books. Indexers of these books should know what's expected from their target audience, Ruth argued. In the UK's national curriculum, there is a specific mention of children having to learn how to use indexes. Readers in years 3 and 4 (who are between the ages of 7 and 9) "should be shown how to use contents pages and indexes to locate information", according to the curriculum. We as indexers have to make our indexes appropriate for their age and education levels. Ruth suggested multiple ways to achieve this, for example by using "doing' words" instead of nouns (e.g. 'running' instead of 'legs' or 'sports'); double-posting instead of cross-referencing; refraining from using subheadings for the smallest children; and using the page numbers in full instead of conflating them. Interestingly, while talking about page ranges, Ruth suggested that some children might find it difficult to understand the meaning of dashes, but still advised against using different constructions such as '20 to 21'. "They are at the age where they need to start learning", she argued, and we shouldn't teach them something they will have to relearn once they get a little older.

Ruth also talked about which terms to use. We should use "naughty words" like 'poo' and 'farts', which are terms that kids will

definitely look up. Deciding on the right words becomes trickier when handling sensitive subject matter and inclusive language issues. 'Hearing loss' is more sensitive than 'deafness', but kids will most likely look up deafness. The same is true for indexing concepts related to identity (such as race, gender, and sexuality) and concepts like slavery/enslavement. The decision depends on the age group, the publisher's requirements, and the terms that the author uses.

### Starting out

Session four featured three different parallel options. Sue Goodman led a session called 'Stretching Out: Gentle Movements During the Workday'. **Paula Clarke Bain** presented "Rowdy hermits mingling creates eloquence (12): Thoughts on constructing crosswords and indexes". I went to a session called 'New Horizons: a Seminar for Students and New Professionals', led by **Lyndsay Marshall**. Lyndsay shared a wealth of information on starting out your indexing business, presenting fundamental and sometimes surprising information about where to find resources. We discussed topics such as responding to enquiries (e.g. preparing quotations, estimating how long a project will take), marketing (e.g. targeted marketing, speculative emails, and setting up your brand), networking, and more.

There were several students who benefitted from this presentation, on one hand because of Lyndsay's excellent material, and on the other because of the experienced indexers who chimed in to offer their own pieces of advice. The representative from The Indexing Society of Canada/Société canadienne d'indexation (ISC/SCI), **Margaret de Boer**, indicated that she attended this session in order to gather new ideas for fresh students coming into the Canadian society. Among the pieces of advice that Lyndsay offered were using online resources from your local library, the British Library, and gov.uk; looking up editors in the acknowledgement

section in books on Amazon; and replying quickly when offered a job. At the end, all participants were handed a four-page document listing even more valuable resources for new indexers.

### CPD

The final session was all about continuing professional development (CPD). Melanie, who chaired this session, explained that professional development does not stop after submitting your final assignment for the training course. While indexers do get experience by indexing, they can just as easily "fall into bad habits". In order for Society members to keep adhering to the highest standards, there are many different ways of maintaining your professional development, scoring CPD points that can lead to a Fellowship grade along the way. Paula talked about the CPD points that she was awarded and which led to her Fellowship grade. There were prerecorded messages from **Nic Nicholas**, who talked about the Self-Evaluation Exercise, which requires you to evaluate one of your own published indexes and demonstrate that you can look at it critically, and **Mary Coe**, who shared some insights about writing for *The Indexer*. We ended the session by writing down our ideas about CPD opportunities on index cards, which Melanie later read out to the group.

After the conference, many of us went for drinks at the Editor's Draught pub across the street and then dinner at the Whitehall Restaurant. Both places were easily accessible and provided us with wonderful food and drinks. They were also lovely opportunities to talk to indexers you still had not met yet, as well as some spouses. The evening was a great conclusion of a conference that, though short, was able to offer many different pieces of indexing information and, most importantly, many different opportunities for connecting with colleagues and friends.

## A Survey of Late-Stage Students and New Professionals

As part of a wider review of the Society's CPD programme, a survey of late-stage training course students (defined as people at the Module D or PIA stages) and new professionals (hereafter NPs) was conducted in June. The aims were: (1) to identify the respondents' level of preparedness for work as professional indexers; (2) to assess the take-up and usefulness of the Society's existing resources for these members; and (3) to solicit views on possible new support services.

Sixteen people fell into the qualifying criteria, and twelve people chose to take part (seven students and five NPs). Obviously, this is a very small number of people, but the participants provided detailed and thoughtful answers to the open-ended questions, and so the value of the survey must be seen in the quality of the feedback, rather than the quantity of responses.

The survey was divided into three parts: questions for the students only; questions for the NPs only; and questions for all the participants regarding the existing and prospective Society services.

### Part 1: The Student Responses

The survey began by asking the student respondents about their current employment status. We were interested in this as it could have a bearing on their level of preparedness for self-employed indexing work. Three respondents are currently self-employed; two work for an employer; and two are not currently in paid work.

When asked about their intended status after qualification, four people hope to combine indexing work with other self-employment; one aims to work as an indexer part-time in combination with work for an employer; and two don't yet know (Fig. 1).

It is interesting that none of the respondents expressed an intention of working full-time as an indexer. As shown later, all the NP respondents combine indexing with other activities. Will the full-time indexer become a rarity? If so, what might

be the implications for both the profession and the Society? Already, this finding is being looked at by the Executive Board with regard to how we promote the training course to prospective new students.

The participants were then asked what steps they had taken already to prepare for professional indexing work. One person has reviewed the market and made preparations for contacting future clients. Five have considered the subject areas in which they might specialise. One has registered as self-employed with HMRC. Four people have made preparations to run a home office.

The students were also asked about their use of the course advisor service, an innovation of the 5th edition of the training course. Two people have referred questions to their course advisors "occasionally" or "frequently". Three had referred a question or questions to their course advisor infrequently or only once; and one has never referred a question.

Lastly, the students were asked how confident they are that they will commence work as an indexer within a few months of completing the training course. They responded as in Fig. 2.

Drilling down on this issue, the five people who said that they were "not confident" or "not sure" offered several reasons (Fig. 3 on p9).

Overall, the impression given by this small sample of student responses is of people who are unconfident, uncertain and who are not particularly well prepared for a future indexing career. It would appear that late-stage students need extra support and encouragement to increase the likelihood of them staying with us. The full findings of the survey have been shared with the Training Course Committee, and it is an issue that will be looked at closely by the CPD Committee.

➔ p9

Fig. 1. "Once you have completed the training course, do you aim to work as an indexer ...?" (Seven responses)

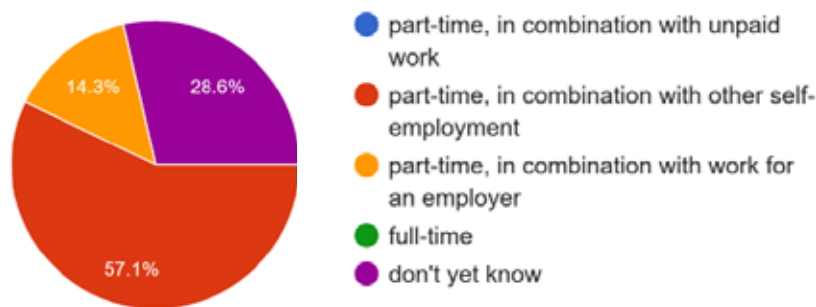


Fig. 2. "How confident are you that you will commence work as an indexer within a few months of completing the training course?" (Seven responses)

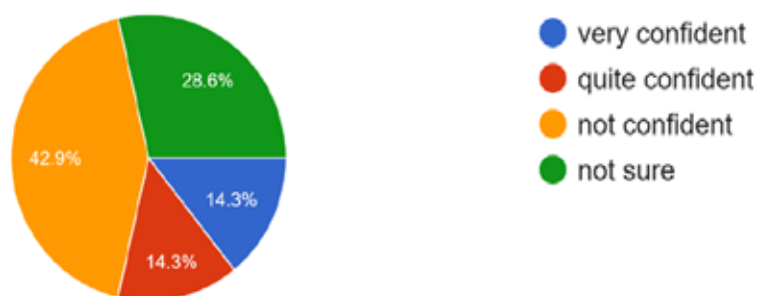




Fig. 3. "If you answered 'not confident' or 'not sure', is this because:" (Five responses)



p8 ↻

### Part 2: The NP Responses

Of the five NP respondents, one qualified more than two years ago; two between 18 months and two years ago; one 12-18 months ago; and one less than six months ago. The participants were asked about their current levels of indexing work and, as we have seen, none work full-time hours (Figs 4 and 5).

Five people said that they are happy with this level of work; and one wanted more indexing work. Three people had reached a satisfactory level of work within six months of qualification; and one took 12-18

months to achieve this. Three of the respondents said that they devote one to three hours per week to business administration, marketing and training activities; and two devote less than an hour a week to these activities.

Three people said that they are satisfied with the rate of pay they receive for their indexing commissions, and two are unsure if they are satisfied. When asked what the main barriers were to their earning more per commission, the respondents cited a lack of confidence in their fee negotiating skills; uncertainty over what fee is appropriate for an early-stage professional; and the

fear of losing commissions to other indexers. Four people said that the Society's recommended rates are "very useful" in support of their fee negotiations and one thought them "quite useful", which is an encouraging finding of the survey.

All five NP respondents reported positive or mainly positive experiences with their first indexing commissions, although one felt hampered by a lack of confidence in their indexing ability.

To promote their services, all five NP respondents update their SI Directory entry regularly (i.e. every few weeks). One person regularly updates a personal website. One person regularly emails publishers and pre-press suppliers about their availability for work. None of the respondents currently use social media for marketing purposes.

Since qualifying, three NPs have undertaken further training on embedded indexing; two on e-books indexing; one on a related editorial skill; and one on a skill unrelated to indexing. Three people said they are very likely to undertake further training in the future; and two said they are unlikely to do so because of cost and time barriers.

Overall, the impression left by the NP survey is much more positive than the student survey. All of the respondents have had good experiences since qualification and are generally satisfied with their levels of work and their fees.

They are all taking steps to market their services and to develop their skills with further training. Hopefully, this feedback can encourage the student respondents who expressed doubts about being able to achieve a satisfying indexing career.

Fig. 4. "Do you currently work as an indexer?" (Five responses)

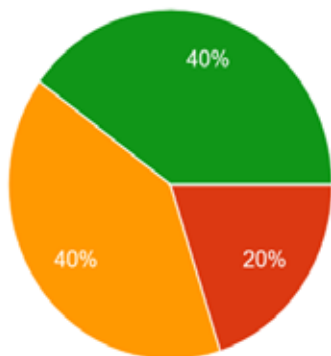
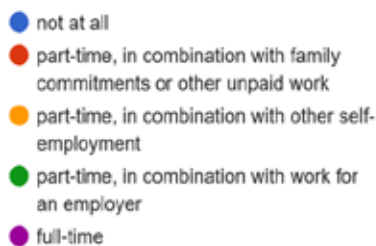
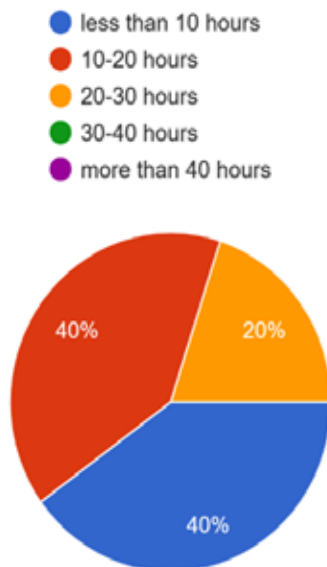


Fig. 5. "On average, how many hours a week do you work as an indexer (i.e. undertaking paid-for indexing work)?" (Five responses)



### Part 3: All Participants' Responses

In this part of the survey, all twelve of the respondents answered questions about their current use of the Society's services. They stated that they read the following resources regularly: *The Indexer* (twelve ↻ p10

p9 ↻ people); Sldeline (ten people); *Sldelights* (nine); the Students' online forum (four); and the New Professionals' online forum (four).

The respondents have taken part in the following SI CPD activities: conference sessions (seven people); informal Zoom meetings (six); peer reviews (five); and workshops (four). Additionally, five told us that they have joined webinars, conference sessions and informal Zoom meetings offered by other indexing societies. Nine people have attended local group meetings, either in person or via Zoom, which is another very pleasing finding.

The Executive Board is exploring the possibility of introducing a formal mentoring scheme for NP indexers. There was a strong expression of interest in this, which dropped only slightly at the suggestion that an unspecified monthly fee might be charged for the service.

When asked about the further CPD and support services that the Society might offer, the respondents requested advice and information on:

- fee negotiations;
- indexing software use;
- estimating the amount of time required to index a text;

- overcoming the dreaded "impostor syndrome";
- initial negotiations with new and prospective clients / what to include in a contract;
- how the publishing industry operates, its timescales and the role of packagers;
- running a freelance business and marketing;
- coping with setbacks;
- achieving a satisfactory work-life balance;
- advanced indexing techniques;
- subject-specific indexing;
- the thought processes of indexing.

By the time you read this, the 2023 Society of Indexers' conference in Leeds will have been held, including its general session on 'CPD Opportunities' and **Lyndsay Marshall's** 'Navigating New Horizons' session for students and NPs. In the light of all this feedback, the survey findings included, the CPD Committee aims to revamp the Society's CPD offerings: watch this space for future announcements.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who took part in the survey. You gave us some surprises and much on which to ponder.

*Ruth Martin*

## OBITUARY

### Hilary Flenley

We are sorry to report the death of Hilary Flenley, aged 92. Hilary graduated with an M.A. before gaining a postgraduate Diploma in Librarianship. She worked as a medical librarian, and then specialised as a medical indexer with her indexing career spanning over 30 years. She was a Registered Indexer (Fellow in modern-speak). Hilary co-organised the first Scottish mini-conference in 1977. When the Scottish Group was formed in 1986, she gave us stalwart support and was a regular attender at our meetings.

*Moyra Forrest and Anne McCarthy*



## My Past Life

### Susie Marques-Jones on the flight from boredom

My past life can be summed up in the words of Thomas Carlyle, "I've got a great ambition to die of exhaustion rather than boredom", or as we say in the ADHD world, "Boredom is our kryptonite". Sifting through my past experiences and trying to present them in a neat, chronological fashion has been a challenge. So, how did I end up doing something as orderly as indexing?

Life for me began in Bristol. My parents had recently emigrated to the UK from Salazar's fascist Portugal, and I grew up in a bilingual household. Like Roald Dahl's Matilda, I was a very early reader, and by the time I was three, I was being hailed as a musical prodigy by the local nursery school staff as I could bang

out any tune requested on the xylophone and then recorder, although I was adamant at this stage that I was going to be a fairy or a painter when I grew up. So, books, music, travel, and art have always featured prominently in my life.

My school days went by reasonably smoothly, apart from the teachers' complaints in school reports that if I wasn't talking too much, I always had my head in a book. Growing up bilingual also gave me a flair for learning languages in secondary school, and I won competitions for art, played violin and flute in the orchestra and took part in any sports that I could, especially netball and hockey.

↻ p11

**p 10** ↻ School was interspersed with long trips by car to Portugal, and then more drives across Portugal to visit my huge family scattered from the Algarve in the south, right up to Braga in the north. But there was always a feeling of not quite belonging in either culture, being “too English” for my Portuguese relatives while “too foreign” for my English friends, and my subsequent tendencies to move about and travel extensively probably stem from this.

Difficulties in processing and time management also became more apparent as I got older, and since “no one had ADHD back then”, I struggled at times but somehow managed to muddle through my GCSEs and A levels with good grades. My interests and goals have always changed rapidly – alleviating that inclination to boredom again – and after knocking the “being a fairy” idea on the head, I decided I wanted to be a brain surgeon (until I watched *Casualty* and realised I was far too squeamish), then a scientist (except I hated the smell of the school science labs), a psychologist, a librarian, a writer, an interpreter, a musician, an artist. (Unfortunately, I hadn’t heard of indexing back then). But in the end, I opted to do a degree in something I enjoyed, choosing to go to Sheffield University to read French, German, and Spanish, changing the Spanish to Swedish for the second and fourth years.

Sheffield was my first venture away from home and up north, but I found that student life along with all the walking on Sheffield’s seven hills gave me the release



*Abseiling in Carinthia, Austria.  
All pics by Susie Marques-Jones*

from boredom that I craved. The third year was spent abroad: first near the French Pyrenees in Pau, and then in the Austrian Alps in Innsbruck. And after graduating from Sheffield, my nomadic lifestyle – interspersed with periods of study and attempts at knuckling down to a career – began.

By now the novelty of being at university had worn off, so I decided against doing the master’s in translation and interpreting I’d applied for. Instead, I spent a few months working in a casino in Portugal before returning to Innsbruck for another year to teach English to 16–19-year-olds, perfect my Austrian German with the help of a few yodelling CDs, and learn to ski.

When I returned to the UK, my mum, who was by now concerned I’d be living out of a backpack forever, persuaded me to apply for a PGCE, even though teaching had never featured even once in my long list of ‘Things I’d like to be’. So, just ten days before the start of term, I applied for a PGCE in Modern Languages in Bristol. Here, I discovered my love-hate relationship with teaching – I loved working with children, but the stifling, musty, ‘teachery’ school environments always seemed to get the better of me.

After ten months of what felt like wading through porridge as a trainee teacher, I worked in summer camps for international students in Kent and Dorset and then as a bra fitter at La Senza, before dusting off my backpack for more travel and work abroad. My first stop was Koblenz in Germany, where I spent a few months teaching English to adults, followed by six months of backpacking through Southeast Asia, Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, and the US. This was filled with experiences like meeting Komodo dragons and crocodiles, trekking around the Australian Outback, scuba diving, glacier climbing, and bungee-jumping.

Then it was back to Europe (Sweden) to teach English and Spanish for a year at a secondary school on the outskirts of Gothenburg. I liked the informality and more student-focused nature of schools there, with teachers addressed by their first names, no dreaded school uniforms, and definitely no musty school smells that seemed to be such a big feature of UK schools. I travelled and visited friends in Stockholm, Oslo and Copenhagen, but the real highlights were the social evenings with my teaching colleagues on the many Swedish holidays such as Lucia, *Valborg* (Walpurgis), *första maj* (May Day) and *midsommar*, which were always coupled with a booklet of Svenska *snavsvisor* (Swedish drinking songs), *snavs* and food.

With the nagging feeling (probably my mum’s voice in my head) that I should probably settle down to do some ‘real work’, I reluctantly returned to England (Sutton) to work as a secondary school languages teacher.

Sutton was perfectly situated to explore London better, and the local adult college had plenty of courses to keep me occupied: I qualified as a Reiki Master; did New Age courses in astrology, tarot, crystal healing and Indian head massage, and took up Scottish and Indian dancing. It was also here that I finally did my Level 1

**p11** ☞ in British Sign Language (BSL). When I was growing up, my best friend's mum was profoundly deaf, and I'd always wanted to improve my BSL skills. When my itchy feet got the better of me again 18 months later, I moved to the Central Coast in Australia, learnt Auslan (Australian Sign Language, which is similar to BSL) and worked as a Teacher of Deaf Children (ToD),



*Susie and friend in Australia*

beginning the mandatory master's course in deaf education in North Rocks in Sydney shortly after. However, after quickly realising that not being able to work on my student visa might cause a few financial issues along with homelessness, I returned to the UK to do the ToD course at Manchester University instead.

Back up north, I spent a few months working in Waterstones, helping to set up the new Trafford Centre store, before starting the full-time ToD course along with a job as a part-time ToD in a resource base with profoundly deaf children using BSL for Stockport Hearing Impaired (HI) Service. After graduating, I spent two years as a Qualified ToD, this time for Manchester HI Service,

before moving back down to the West Country and doing a further year as a QToD at the Royal College for the Deaf in Exeter.

A year later, I stopped teaching to raise my family, living in Bristol and Bath before venturing across the border to Carmarthenshire in South Wales. As I was now home educating my children, I decided I needed to work from home and began the Publishing Training Centre (PTC) Basic Proofreading course and subsequently setting up as a freelancer; this was shortly followed by the PTC's Essential Copyediting course. And it was here that I finally found out about indexing.

Until this point, I'd never realised that there were people who wrote indexes, and although I was an avid reader of non-fiction and used indexes often, to me they just appeared as if by magic. But in the short section on endmatter in the PTC copyediting course, I found out that indexing was a real profession and that there were human indexers who actually wrote these. It sounded ideal – reading lots of books and organising subjects, names, etc. into alphabetical lists; reading and learning about a variety of new subjects – and I thought "How hard could it be?"

I finally began the SI's Training in Indexing course in January 2021 and quickly found out that indexing was a *lot* harder than I'd thought. But after all the searching for a profession where I would always be learning something new (and would keep any signs of boredom at bay), that gave me an excuse to read all the time and that was itself an art form, I'd finally found it in indexing.

Although my progress on the SI course was hampered by personal issues and doing too many other things at the same time (a Level 6 in BSL, calligraphy courses, representing people with type 1 diabetes in research trials, etc.), I finally qualified as an accredited indexer in February this year. And after a few months of suffering from severe impostor syndrome, I finally created my SI Directory entry and started taking on my first real indexing commissions – and not a hint of boredom in sight.

## My Neck of the Woods

### Linda Haylock enjoys the north-west coast of England

Parkgate, where I live, is a conundrum. First, what is it? It is neither a manor, a hamlet nor a parish, and is therefore not strictly a village. It is, however, a district of Neston, the adjoining town. But who wants to call the area they live in a 'district'? Wikipedia refers to it as a village, and that suits me quite nicely. Second, where is it? Is it in Wirral, Merseyside or is it in Cheshire? Well, it is in both. It is situated on the edge of Cheshire yet located on the Wirral Peninsula, bordering on one side another town, Heswall, which is definitely classed as being a Wirral town. It isn't as confusing as Saltney, though, a town near Chester. The residents along one side of the street in Saltney live in

Wales, whereas those on the other side live in England, with each side having its own school terms, councils, etc. I must look up whether people drive up one side of the street at 20 mph, and 30 mph down the other side.

And, would you believe, there are even two ways of pronouncing Parkgate depending on whether you place the emphasis on the *Park* or the *Gate*.

I'm pleased I've never had to index it –

Parkgate  
in Cheshire and Merseyside (sort of)  
pronunciation (take your pick)  
as village (but maybe not)

**p12** ↻ However you define Parkgate, its one true thing is its uniqueness. It is the only coastal village in Cheshire. The Parkgate Society describe it as the only sea-side resort in Cheshire, though there is no sand around, at least not of the bucket and spade variety.

Parkgate is situated along the banks of the River Dee, which flows into the Irish Sea. Today, though, you can only see the river as a streak in the distance, unless it is a high tide when the water comes much closer to land. The village is separated from a vast expanse of salt marsh by an old, well-worn, red sandstone sea wall. Standing on the sea wall, you have a view of marsh, a distant ribbon of river and then the Welsh hills. The salt marsh developed as the River Dee began to silt up.

Before the silting of the river (a gradual process happening over many years), Parkgate was known during the 18th century as a ship-building place, as well as a sea-bathing resort, where the elite used the waters in the hope of a cure for ailments. It also boasted a fishing tradition and a ropemaking industry. As in many coastal villages, tales of smuggling activities, of ghosts, and of tragic shipping disasters abound.

Parkgate has been visited by several famed figures in history, the most notable being Emma Hamilton, mistress of Lord Nelson. Born in Neston, she frequented Parkgate for holidays and to take the seaweed cure for a skin complaint. Handel passed through on one occasion on his way back from Ireland. Currently, we have one celebrity living here – an ex-member of Boyzone – and, in Neston, until his recent death, we had Gerry Marsden (of Gerry and the Pacemakers). Parkgate had 30 minutes of fame in its own right: it was featured on the recent TV programme, *Villages by the Sea*.

Other highlights include spectacular sunsets, the famous Nicholls ice cream shop and an extremely popular fish and chip vendor. We have numerous coffee

bars, wine bars, pubs, restaurants and a hotel along the front. Another, more natural highlight is the scope for birdwatching. During winter (particularly during the high tides where the water can reach up to the sea wall), there can be seen marsh harriers, the rarer hen harrier, kestrels, short-eared owls and merlin looking for prey. In the autumn, flocks of pink-footed and Canada geese fly over to roost on the salt marsh, and in the spring, there are little egrets, great white egrets and even spoonbills, to name but a few. It's pretty good living in a place where hearing the call of a curlew is not a rare occurrence.

As with every location, there are drawbacks. Parkgate's include the fact that there are no grocery stores, and no facilities for banking money or posting mail – it's a walk or drive up the hill to Neston for those (even further afield in the case of banks). And, at times, it is *too* popular. With a road that narrows at several places along the front, and with limited parking, the traffic is hell to negotiate during holidays and at weekends.

We have the occasional storms and gales which bring flooding where the waters breach the sea wall and flood the cottages along the front parade. And not to forget the mosquitoes. Because of the salt-marsh environment and (this year in particular) the warm but rainy conditions, we have been inundated with mosquitoes. Thankfully, they are not the malaria-bearing kind. However, one can't have everything and on the whole, I'm very happy residing in Parkgate.

What brought me here? Well, I was born in Stockport, then my parents moved down to Dorset where we spent four years. My Dad then found work with the water authority in North East Wales, fairly close to Chester. And from our home in Queensferry, my parents often took me and my sister to Parkgate for a walk along the sea wall, a bag of fish and chips and an ice-cream if we were good. I remember those evenings with

↻ **p14**



**p13** ☞ fondness and always thought it would be lovely to live in Parkgate. Thousands of feet have walked along the sea wall before and after mine; so many that the wall dips along its top where walkers have worn a channel.

I met and married my husband, we moved down to Bedfordshire with his work, living there for 27 years until he retired. I'd already begun my career in indexing by then, a conveniently portable career, and so, with no reason to stay in Bedfordshire, it seemed a good idea to move back up North to be nearer my parents. Parkgate was where I wanted to live all those years ago, and so here we are.

Many locals say they would love to see Parkgate as a picturesque fishing village, with the water high enough to sail small boats in, which would dock at the sea wall on still summer evenings, highlighted by the gorgeous sunsets. I personally prefer the wildness of it, that glorious expanse of reeds, with the occasional bird-inhabited pool to add interest. In other words, it's perfect exactly as it is.

Away from Parkgate and further up the peninsula, Wirral has a strong Viking heritage, in which I've recently become quite interested – not to the extent of dressing up as a Valkyrie or wearing an apron-dress at Viking re-enactments, but enough to attend Viking walks and talks given in the area. In 902, The Wirral was 'invaded' by Norwegian Vikings, who had been ejected from Ireland, and hence were looking for a new place to settle. Ingimund, the chief warlord, came to an agreement with Æthelflæd, daughter of Alfred the Great, and Lady of the Mercians, who was at that time ruling Chester. She granted the use of land in Wirral on the proviso that the Vikings stayed out of Chester, hence their settlement here.

Unfortunately, the Vikings never left written records, but we have evidence they were here in the form of artefacts such as hogback stone grave-markers, tools, stone carvings, coins, Norse place names, mentions in the Irish Annals and *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and even, possibly, a Viking vessel buried beneath a pub car park. In Febru-



*Viking placename – Linda cleaned up the sign.*

ary, bore holes were drilled below the front of the pub patio, and samples of the wooden boat underneath were taken. Eventually, some fibres of wood were extracted. The strands of wood have undergone a delicate cleaning operation and they are currently being analysed in Nottingham, Oxford and Norway (DNA testing and carbon dating included). Only then will we have an idea if the boat is of Viking origin. The signs are looking good, however.

There is also a long-standing debate over the location of the Battle of Brunanburh fought between the Anglo-Saxons (led by Æthelstan) and the allied Norse, Scots, and Britons (led by Olaf Guthfrithson, King of Dublin). There is a very good argument that this battle took place in Wirral which is becoming accepted as likely by more and more historians. However, as in the case of the Battle of Hastings, we will probably never truly know where it occurred.

I attend as many as I can of **Ann Hudson's** 'Talking About the Past' online sessions. Although history is not one of my specialist subjects, I have indexed two history books so far (on World War II), and the historical aspects of subjects have cropped up in many books I have indexed. However, I have yet to index a book on the Vikings, so should any of my fellow history indexers be too busy to take on a book about them, please send it my way.



*Sunset from the bedroom window. Pics by Linda Haylock*

see also ...

Thus far it has proved an unusually challenging year in your correspondent's household. Both my partner and I have been diagnosed with potentially life-threatening conditions. The former's case requires a course of treatment spread over several months, which has begun but which, as yet, allows insufficient evidence to predict whether it will prevail. My own indisposition requires major surgery, for which I await a date, only too aware that such dates are eminently moveable feasts while the NHS is under such severe and continuing pressure. Still, we remain philosophical and indeed even positive about our prospects, telling each other that we are embarked on new experiences, new adventures and, as in all things, hoping for the best, braced for the worst.

This situation prompts reflection about how we indexers manage our workloads and our undertakings to deliver the goods. What happens if we are suddenly unavailable to complete a job or incapable of delivering even partially completed work? What happens if – and it could happen to any of us at any time – we drop dead with no warning? Is anyone else in the household able to access the device on which we have been compiling the index? Does anyone know with whom we have been dealing and how to contact them? Would it be possible for someone other than its creator to send the work compiled so far and/or to arrange for its completion by another indexer? After all, the client may well not know where to turn in such an emergency. Is there anyone in one's household or on one's contact list who does know where to turn?

Maybe some far-sighted indexers routinely establish a *modus operandi* that embraces these eventualities, but one rather suspects that such visionaries are few and far between. Any unforeseen death is apt to leave a deal of unfinished business, and some bequeath an extensive mess. Even if I warmly advocate herewith that we all swiftly attend to the implications of being abruptly removed in mid-index, I doubt that many of us will actually get around to doing so, not least myself, even though the prospect of my sudden demise has been somewhat enhanced by the developments in my state of health.

On the work front, I am currently embarked on a major servicing project, as I will elaborate below. Suffice to record for the moment that the book I am eventually to index is still being written and is delivered to me chapter by chapter. Given the particular circumstance that I may well be hauled out of participation to spend several days in hospital followed (if all goes well) by a

period of convalescence before the project is complete, it seemed necessary to enquire whether any fellow indexer might be willing to put herself or himself on stand-by to take over the job. Luckily for me, two intrepid individuals volunteered for this potentially thankless and (at least initially and perhaps perpetually) unrewarded role. Given the inherent generosity and kindness of SI members, I can hardly reckon to be surprised.

There is a further aspect to the job, which raises a different question about one's role, and adds a consideration for my stand-in. I compiled the index for this author's first book a couple of years ago. He was evidently satisfied with my efforts, and also reacted very positively to those particular proofing notes that I ventured to offer because they touched on issues affecting the index. So when he asked me whether I would be available to index his second book, he also invited me to act as his editor. He had attempted the role himself with that first book and naturally found it onerous. I had noticed a certain lack of evidence of any editing presence but kept *shtum*.

I should declare at once that I am not a member of the Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading, and hence have never undertaken its training course. However, in a long career in journalism and television production, I have frequently subedited the copy of fellow journalists, script-edited the work of writers for the box, assessed play texts for television and the stage, and written reviews of scripted work for the cinema, the theatre and broadcasting. As you may guess, it also falls to me to sub all the copy submitted to *Sidelights*. Hence the prospect of editing the text of a book on a subject about which I know a certain amount does not fill me with misapprehension. I believe I am capable of doing a sufficiently professional job, and the fact that I was specifically asked for confirms me in my sense that accepting the offer was not inappropriate. ➤ p16

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Card from the interrupted index of a museum collection

**p15** 🔄 However, that I might be obliged to bow out not only from indexing this book but also editing it both at a macro and at a line-by-line level added to the questions about taking it on. To be candid, a need for the increased income involved also played its part, not to mention the benefit of being able to cite the book if further editing gigs should arise. As it has transpired, no fee has yet been agreed because the only criterion upon which I can confidently calculate a fee – word count – is still far from clear. To an unusual degree, the author and I are progressing in a spirit of mutual trust.

That I have a fellow indexer prepared to step into any breach has turned out fortuitously to be a boon. My

stand-by is a qualified member of the CIEP and happy not only to take up those additional functions if I am incapacitated but also selflessly to hold my hand and advise me as I essay the first pass over the early chapters wearing my newly fashioned editor's hat.

So one perseveres, hoping – as indicated – for the best. The greatest imposition that the condition places upon me at present expresses itself in frequent bouts of fluctuating tiredness. And it's a mercy that indexing does not entail leaving one's desk. My natural walking pace, I calculate, is around a quarter of what it was twelve months ago.

*The Locator*

## Local Groups

### London

In July, five of us met for a visit to the Freud Museum. Situated in a quiet, tree-lined street in Hampstead, the museum was also Sigmund Freud's last home. It is a stylish 1920s house with a very pleasant enclosed garden. After the Nazis annexed Austria, Freud and his family escaped to London. Freud lived in the house for the last year of his life. The house has all the Freud family's furniture from Vienna, which surprisingly the Nazis sent on to London. However, Freud was unable to bring out his four sisters from Nazi-occupied Europe, and they sadly all perished in concentration camps.

Several rooms in the house are furnished as they were when Freud lived there. The most interesting by far is Freud's study, which houses his famous couch, together with his desk and antiques collection. These antiques, along with Freud's many books, cover every available surface. There was also an exhibition in the museum entitled 'Freud's Antiquity: Object, Idea, Desire', which demonstrated how inspirational antiques were to Freud for his work.

Freud's daughter Anna, a pioneer of child psychoanalysis, lived in the house for the rest of her life after her father died. After her death, the house became a museum dedicated to the memory of her father. Anna Freud's room in the house has much information about her life and work.

After exploring the museum, we had lunch in a local Italian restaurant. We missed our group organiser **Rohan Bolton**, but hope she will be able to join us for our next meeting later in the year.



*Barry Campbell, Christine Shuttleworth, Cath Topliff and Beverley Winkler, with Freud's couch to the side. Pic: Nicola King*

*Beverley Winkler*  
[londongroup@indexers.org.uk](mailto:londongroup@indexers.org.uk)

### Three Choirs

Our July outing was to Oxford, a little way out of our Three Choirs Area, at the Ashmolean Museum. We met for coffee first before a few of us went to the Labyrinth exhibit of antiques from Knossos. I think what impressed me most were the intricate 'small finds' drawings. **Nicola King** also joined us for lunch at Brown's. Before lunch, the weather was a bit drizzly, but afterwards, other members having left for home, it was nice enough for Nicola to show me Christ Church meadow before my train. I managed to get back to the station as the heavens opened.

Our most recent Zoom was on 3 October. We were nine altogether. As some of us had been to conference the week before, we talked about how successful it was and how good it was to see other indexers we

🔄 **p17**





ABOVE: The Ashmolean. ВОТТОМ: Christ Church meadow.  
Pics by Pam Scholefield

**p16** ☞ don't get to see often. Because I had gone to the Index Manager session, we talked about that and also landed for a few minutes on Fellowship. There was also discussion on how to make universities pay when they were being particularly slow – something I'm sure we will discuss again.

Our next meeting will be at Batsford Arboretum on 22 November. We will let you know if there are any leaves left on the trees. These days you never know.

*Pam Scholefield*  
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