

RYERSON INDEX INC

Minutes of the Committee Meeting held 16 April 2010, 1.30pm by SKYPE

Present:

John Graham, President
Peter Kettle, Vice President
Pauline Kettle, Secretary
Therese Delanty, Treasurer
Bill Shute, Committee Member; back indexing coordinator.

Apologies: Nil

John Graham opened the Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were taken as read.

President's Report

The rolling yearly average of new entries into the Index now stands at 1,146 per day which is an increase since the AGM in July last year when it stood at 1,104. This is in part due to the back indexing, particularly the back indexing of the Goulburn data.

Goulburn is now entered from 1980 onwards. Some data has to be checked with the Goulburn Library before the 1979 data can be added, then data back to the 1930s can be added. John commented that it takes about an hour to add and correct a year due to the way the data is presented.

We accepted a quote from Rob McDonnell to update our data entry program and website just prior to last year's AGM. Unfortunately the update has not been carried through yet. It was suggested that Rob should be approached to see if he is too busy, and whether we should look elsewhere for future support. Specialised knowledge of online databases is required at a level beyond the scope of our current membership. John will also check with Rob as to whether the new site will be ready for John's presentation on 15th May at Coffs Harbour. John will advise on the outcome of his enquiries.

A number of Queensland regional papers have been copied by John and will be sent to Bill Shute for distribution. They amount to about 1,000 days.

Secretary's Report

Correspondence out – 10 letters of thanks acknowledging donations. Six of the donations have been received from Family History Groups.

Correspondence in – about 6-8 requests for incorrect data on the Index to be corrected. All requests are checked against the original papers and have been forwarded to John for correction.

There are now 134 registered Ryerson members.

There is a continuing flow of people offering to index for Ryerson. All those applying to index are invited to go through the training programme, but only a small number attempt the training after reading what is involved. Some give up after failing at the first attempt. They have three opportunities to attempt the programme and 100% is the pass level required for acceptance as an indexer.

Treasurer's Report

ING Balance - \$6,138.91 (Interest bearing account)

ANZ Balance - \$1,065.71 (Cheque account – no interest)

Donations received by Secretary from 1 July 2009-13 April 2010 totalled \$1,380.35. *[Note: This includes \$5.35 which has been converted from US\$5.00 for the purpose of the accounts. This amount has as yet not been presented to the bank and is held in cash.]*

It was agreed that \$800 be transferred from ANZ to ING (interest bearing account).

General Business

- A Memory Tree.

An approach has been made by a commercial company in New Zealand called A Memory Tree (AMT – website www.amemorytree.co.nz). Their operation collects death and other notices by automated means from various sources, mostly funeral directors. They claim to capture 98% of deaths in NZ. Extended correspondence was exchanged with AMT and with the committee. The committee further discussed the matter and it was felt that a joint commercial (AMT) and non commercial (Ryerson Index) site would not be suitable for our type of free index as AMT would certainly gain commercially. This may conflict with our policy to remain a free service.

It was agreed that John Graham contact AMT with a reply “thanks, but no thanks”, but that we would make a link to their site more visible and that hopefully the link to the Ryerson Index would be reciprocated.

- AGM -2010

Annual General Meeting – has been set for 7th August 2010, 1.30pm at Richmond Villa, Kent Street, Sydney.

- Back Indexing

Now that the back issues of the SMH pre-1955 have been digitised by the NLA, John suggested that we should concentrate on indexing and filling the gaps of SMH papers from 1955 onwards.

Bill commented that indexing the Tamworth paper will cease at present due to the difficulty of indexing from the web. He is still in contact with the Tamworth [F.H.] group to see if they can index but lack of computer facilities by the group has created problems. Discussion is still in progress with them to see if the death notices from Tamworth's local paper could be sent to Bill for indexing by other indexers.

John commented that there is a problem with indexing in many country areas during school holidays – there is a noticeable increase in the number of NIL days (and often NIL weeks!), as if the person responsible for putting the data on the website is away. All the more reason for using printed notices wherever possible.

- Look Ups at the State Library

Therese reported that she is up to date with the lookups at the State Library. The biggest problem is requests supplying the wrong dates or information.

- Family History Fairs

It is realised that Ryerson representation by the committee at a number of the country F.H. fairs cannot be covered due to distance and time being prohibitive. It was agreed that we should ask a local indexer if he/she could represent us and we would give them back-up support where necessary with a presentation and handout material. This was agreed.

It was agreed that, when F.H. Fairs are advertised, we establish if a local volunteer is available to represent us. If so, a request could then be made to that F.H. group for a table.

If a request is made by a F.H. group for a Ryerson talk to be included as part of their programme, consideration has to be given as to the facilities that are available at the venue. It has been found that some venues do not have Internet facilities available. Peter Kettle suggested that where Internet is not available a wireless dongle could be an option which R.I. could purchase. This can then be passed to any of the speakers or representatives to use at the fairs. Enquiries are to be made as to suitable equipment for our purposes.

Representation at current F.H. Fairs –

Coffs Harbour – 15 May 2010

John Graham to represent Ryerson

Hawkesbury Family History Society 7th August 2010

David Bales to represent Ryerson at Windsor.

Liverpool FHS 20 & 21 August 2010.

Therese Delanty kindly agreed to represent Ryerson.

Cowra FHS 21 August 2010.

Pauline & Peter Kettle to represent Ryerson

Shoalhaven Family History Soc. NSW &ACT Association of Family History Societies
Annual State Conference 2010 – 17-19 September 2010
Helen Ruttley has been approached to represent Ryerson.

Bega Valley Family Genealogy Society Fair - 23 October 2010.

Ryerson will be represented at the Bega Valley FGS by the local Librarian. Bill Shute will send them handouts for the Library and for the History Group.

- Maitland Mercury

Pauline Kettle reported that correspondence is in progress regarding back indexing this newspaper. An approach was made to us by someone in the Maitland area who wishes to share with us her death, obit, funeral and legal records she has extracted from the Mercury and placed in an Excel programme. At present clarification is required to ascertain what the data on her Excel sheet represents so it can be converted, if possible, into our database. No response has been received as yet to various queries put to her.

- Vacancy on the Committee

Pat Schinkel resigned from Committee as at 31st March 2010. Pat has been thanked for her valuable contribution in the past. The vacancy will be filled at the AGM in August.

- R.S.V.P. – Browse Supplement

Requests by users have been made for notices within the RSVP Browse Supplement section of the Ryerson Index to be removed due to the information being out of date or no longer required.

John expressed doubt as to the value of maintaining this section. It is labour intensive and cannot be entered into the indexing programme. Data has not been updated by the indexer for four years, although some of the more recent data has been posted to the DPS-SYDNEY mailing list. It was suggested by John that this section be removed from the front page of the Index and archived. This was agreed.

The meeting closed at 3pm.