

RYERSON INDEX INC COMMITTEE MEETING

17 November 2021 – 7.30pm Zoom

The Meeting opened at 7.34pm

Present:

John Graham – President

Peter Kettle – Vice President

Pauline Kettle – Secretary

Therese Delanty - Treasurer

Kathy Conroy – Assistant Treasurer

Robert Atkins - Committee Member & Special Assignments

Apologies – Paul Kean

Minutes of the last Committee meeting held on 9 July 2021 were taken as read and adopted.

Adoption of the Minutes

Proposed: Robert Atkins

Seconded: John Graham

Matters Arising from the Minutes-

- 1) John Graham reported that he had taken out a one-month subscription to *The West Australian* for the purpose of copying death and funeral notices at a cost of \$7 per week. This subscription has now expired. During that time the appropriate pages have been fully copied for the year. This had been done in conjunction with Kathy Conroy.

Kathy has informed John that there is 24hr access to *The West Australian* archives available at a cost of \$8 for that period. After further discussion, John Graham proposed that we access the 24hr option every two months to download the appropriate pages and by so doing reducing the cost of a 12x1 month subscription or yearly subscription. This was seconded by Peter Kettle and carried by the Committee.

President's Report (John Graham) – Submitted report attached

Proposed: Kathy Conroy

Seconded: Robert Atkins

Matters Arising from the President's Report -

- 1) Since the President's report was submitted, John Graham received a communication from a Sydney solicitor, who also has an IT business for the legal profession, much of which deals with wills. The solicitor's original objective was to approach Ryerson to see how he could assist with accessing notices from NSW Funeral Directors. After further discussion, he has offered to approach the appropriate NSW association of Funeral Directors to request access to their data base which in turn would be of value to our site. He has also become a corporate sponsor of Ryerson.
- 2) John Graham recorded that The Ryerson Index now contains just over 8 million entries.

Secretary's Report (Pauline Kettle) – Submitted report attached

Proposed: John Graham

Seconded: Therese Delanty

Matters Arising from the Secretary's report-

- 1) Therese Delanty enquired if there was any update from the Cootamundra Aboriginal Girls Training School. The Secretary replied that a note of thanks had been received.
- 2) Kathy Conroy queried the 9 requests for lookups received through the Secretary's desk. The Secretary remarked that the person had obviously not used our lookup service. The requester commented that she could not connect to the newspaper on the Ryerson Search Page. The enquirer was given instructions of how to find the requests herself via links on the Ryerson Home Page. Three notices were sent to her as they were not available from the web.

Treasurer's Report (Kathy Conroy) - Submitted report attached

Proposed: Peter Kettle

Seconded: Robert Atkins

There were no matters arising from the Treasurer's Report.

At this point John Graham advised the Committee that Kathy Conroy had taken over as Treasurer from Therese Delanty due to Therese's recent health problems. Therese will remain as a member on the Committee.

On behalf of Ryerson, John expressed sincere thanks to Therese for the many years she had served as Treasurer since the time the Ryerson Index became incorporated in 2008.

Administration Report (Peter Kettle) – Submitted report attached

Proposed: John Graham

Seconded: Robert Atkins

There were no matters arising from the Administration Report:

Special Assignment Report (Bob Atkins) Submitted report attached

Proposed: John Graham

Seconded: Pauline Kettle

There were no matters arising from the Special Assignments Report.

John Graham thanked Bob for his continuing involvement with the development of training indexing teams and other duties he has taken on within his portfolio.

General Business

- 1) By email request - Dawn Montgomery proposed that a reminder be placed on the Mailing List regarding checking of indexing by the indexers before submitting. She made comment that too many errors are being made such as a mixture of upper and lower case in the name, double and treble letters, reversal of letters in names and place names. It was emphasized by Dawn the importance of checking the indexing by indexers in the proforma and/or in the .txt file before it is sent through. John Graham agreed to place a notice/reminder on the Mailing List.

- 2) Peter Kettle remarked that although there is computer checking for typos such as triple letters and misplaced capitals before a record is entered into the database, we know that there are typographical errors. Letter transpositions such as 'Farnk' instead of 'Frank' are not readily identified by computer checking. At present John is advised of any such errors and he corrects them individually. Peter suggested that we need a system that can be used by anybody to submit corrections with 2 important criteria, a) that it is user friendly which means Windows style and b) it generates a file which is able to correct the database without action for every record (other than perhaps a single keystroke to accept it) by John. It was suggested and agreed that John should discuss the proposal with Rex to determine if it is possible.
- 3) There was extensive discussion about abuse of the lookup system. One or more people using the same email address have made numerous requests which is not in itself a problem. However, emails from these people demanding to know when they will receive the lookups have been abusive and insulting resulting in a decision not to provide such lookups. There was discussion as to whether to contact them in an attempt to normalize the relationship but the opinion of the Committee was that such an approach was unlikely to be productive and that we should continue to leave these requests unanswered.

The meeting closed at 8.28pm

Secretary's Report

RYERSON INDEX INC

SECRETARY'S REPORT – Committee Meeting, 17 November 2021

July – November 2021

General Enquiries and Requests

- (a) Radio freelance journalist asking to interview someone regarding the site (*referred to John Graham*)
- (b) Request for complete extract of RI to match up names with old land titles holdings for Uni project (*referred John Graham – data sent re cost – did not pursue with request*)
- (c) Request for 9 lookups (Kathy Brennan) – (*given instructions how to obtain the notices as they were all available on the web*)
- (d) Request for lookups for The Age – (*papers not yet indexed– referred to use our instructions, AustCem. or Greater Melbourne Cemeteries Trust site for burial details, Ask a Librarian*)
- (e) No response to lookup (*found that the enquiry form had been filled in incorrectly*)
- (f) Site not working – cannot connect to the newspaper (*explained the Index is only an index. Referred them to our link on Home Page suggesting where to locate the paper*)
- (g) Request for old death notices relating to Wauchope (*referred enquirer look at Trove, or to contact Port Macquarie Library, Port FHS or Museum for very old information*)
- (h) Request to have individual notices of past deaths placed on our site (*suggested placing a 'late notice' in one of the dailies we index marked as a Death Notice not IM*)
- (i) Request for Ryerson to index Bunbury South Western Times WA required 1960 paper (*referred enquirer to the newspaper site or the SL WA*)
- (j) Request for information relating to the Training Home for Aboriginal Girls in Cootamundra – who died at the Home and where were they buried. (*Referred to the NSW Archives as they hold the records of that Home, the local Council or FHS*)
- (k) Aboriginal burials in Cape York – does Ryerson hold any records of the graves of Aboriginals in Cape York or Albany Island. The enquirer was working with the Aboriginal Native Title Trustees who have heritage sites listed. (*Bob Atkins gave some suggestions but these had already been investigated*)
- (l) Perpetual Trustees enquiry re our data (*forwarded to John Graham*)
- (m) JURIS IT Services – enquiry about our data (*forwarded to John Graham – resulted in donation with further data provided*)
- (n) Invitation to NSWACT Annual General Meeting & Conference (*Bob Atkins attended as Ryerson's representative*)
- (o) Enquiry from Scotland – trying to locate a death notice found on Ryerson and obtain recent BDM certificates in WA (*Notice sent and explanation given regarding obtaining recent certificates or information. Found links with persons mentioned in the notice*)

Applications to Index –

One application only – did not attempt trial or reply to a follow up email.

Pauline Kettle.

Special Assignments Report

Report to the Ryerson Index Inc. Committee Meeting – 17 Nov 2021

Unfortunately Covid-19 caused a complete cessation of visits to Family History Groups.

I did attend the virtual Annual Conference of the NSW ACT FH Societies and have circulated a report previously I have video copies of the virtual presentations.

The SMH

With the assistance of Judith Chivers, the gathering of the proverbial missing years between 2005 and 2016 has been completed.

The AGE

Following the offer by Clare Stapleton to provide us with access to the website.... Newspapers.com, I established a gathering program for the years 1991 to 2000.

Unfortunately, Clare has not been able to contribute to this program due to her hospitalisation and subsequently slow recovery. I have not heard from her recently.

As a result, approval was given by the Committee to subscribe for a period of 6 months to this website.

Judith Chivers and Craige Hicks have started work on gathering copy.

Shari Maclean is indexing the missing dates for the database.

As Judith is gathering obituaries as well as deaths and funerals, this has presented a fairly large number of additional entries for dates which have previously been indexed. I am processing these myself for the moment.

Craige is hopeful of being able to access the Deakin University Library soon.

I will report to the Committee from time to time as this work progresses.

Visitation program

I have sent out follow up emails to groups who were previously lined up pre Covid-19.

Hopefully we will be back to normal in 2022.

RNR

This work continues although the volume has dropped off with the closure of papers.

HOWEVER,

In August, John invited me to add to my management program, The **RYERSON GATHERING PROGRAM.**

This new addition includes the Funeral Directors gathering.

Bob Atkins

ADMIN REPORT NOVEMBER 2021

COMMENT FROM USERS

Basically the same as previous years; this year 10 indexing errors have been reported by users. The 2 most prevalent type of errors are typos and simple misreading of the notice which may in part be due to the quality of the image, e.g. ages.

BACK INDEXING

Numbers

Year	Total Indexed	Back Indexing	Current year indexing	% Back Indexing
2021 to Nov 12	291,870	201,076	90,797	69
2020	392,868	277,360	115,508	70
2019	472,996	330,672	142,324	70
2018	515,050	342,407	172,643	66

Back indexing essentially falls into 2 groups, the Age and the rest. The rest progress with minimal input from me. The Age may be regarded as 2 sections, 1955 to 2005 inclusive which is a project being managed by Bob Atkins, see his report. The second group, i.e. prior to 1955 are papers that are in Trove and as such are of lesser importance than post-1954. However, they are being slowly indexed mostly by new indexers, but it is not uncommon for them to cease indexing after having done a few months. However the uncompleted years are being addressed.

LOOKUPS

In general the system works satisfactorily with a small number of changes to the range of available look ups.

Peter Kettle