
Obituary

Jason Edward Louis Farradane, 1906 - 1989

After some months of illness Jason Farradane passed away peacefully on June 27th, just three months short of his eighty-third birthday.

His contributions to classification research in the fifties, sixties and seventies should not need evaluation for readers of this journal. His concept of relational indexing was a superior alternative to the Boolean relations by then already entrenched in information retrieval systems. Economics unfortunately dictates, however, that intellectual effort at the input stage, whilst it can save considerable effort at the output stage, is not normally profitable for the database producers. This, combined with an innate Le Chatelier-like tendency to preserve the status quo, meant that relational indexing never received the attention it deserved.

Farradane has two other monuments. He was a prime mover behind the founding of the Institute of Information Scientists in 1958 and was its first Honorary Secretary until 1969. During this period he launched the world's first course in information science in 1961. In 1963, at the age of 57, he started on an academic career which was responsible for the founding of what has become a major centre for information science teaching research. The history of this school has been described in detail in the special issue of the *Journal of Information Science* (1) produced to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of information science at the City University. This issue also contains a biobibliography of Farradane (2) and an appreciation of his research by B.C. Brookes (3). A more recent account of research in the school which Farradane founded prefaced the 1988-1989 edition of *Current Research for the Information Profession*.

Jason was the son of a well known chemistry professor. On graduating as a chemist from the Royal College of Science and also gaining an Associateship of the Royal College of Music, rather than trade on his father's name, he changed his name to Farradane. He derived this name from Farraday and Haldane, the two nineteenth century scientists whom he most admired.

Farradane became professionally involved with documentation about 1934 and shortly afterwards joined

Aslib. In 1948 he became documentalist/information chemist at Tate and Lyle's Research laboratories. With other members of Aslib he sought to get appropriate training and qualifications sponsored by Aslib. The eventual defeat of the resulting proposals at the Aslib Conference in 1957 led directly to the founding of the IIS. As mentioned earlier he became a senior member of the academic staff of the precursor institution of the City University in 1963. He retired as Director of the Centre for Information Science there in 1973. In 1974 he became a Visiting Research Professor at the University of Western Ontario where he published nearly 20 papers in the next seven years. In 1982 he returned to England to cultivate a garden and his musical interests and really retired from information science. I do, however, recall the first Farradane lecture of the IIS which he was persuaded to give in 1986. This was more remarkable for its vision of the future than its reminiscences of the past. In 1986 the City University recognised one of its more outstanding staff by awarding him an Honorary DSc. at a time which happily coincided with his eightieth year and 25 years of information science courses. Beneath a gruff exterior lay what was essentially a very kind and rather shy persona. I, for one, will never forget the kindness and helping hand he gave me when I took over from him in 1973. The world of classification research and information science in general has lost one of its very few giants.

References:

- (1) Rennie, J.S.: A history of the Department of Information Science of the City University. *J. Inform. Sci.* 12 (1986) p.3-13
- (2) Bottle, R.T., Brookes, B.C., Yates-Mercer, P.A.: Jason Farradane—a biobibliography. *J. Inform. Sci.* 12 (1986) p.19-21
- (3) Brookes, B.C.: Jason Farradane and relational indexing. *J. Inform. Sci.* 12 (1986) p.15-18
- (4) Bottle, R.T.: Information science research at the City University, London. In: *Current Research for the Information Profession*. P. Elliott, ed. London, GB: Library Association 1989, p.a5-a14.