Guest Editorial

The future of the Society of Indexers

Following my election as President of the Society of Indexers in 1987, the Editor kindly invited me to contribute a Guest Editorial to the April 1988 issue of The Indexer ('New President—continuing challenges'). I am delighted that she has renewed this invitation now that, four years later, my very enjoyable Presidency has come to an end, giving me the opportunity to air some of my hopes for the future development of SI.

In June 1990 Claire Troughton and Ian Crane organized a successful day for SI officers and Council members on the future of the Society: what the Society must do now is translate into action the ideas then put forward. We carried out a SWOTC analysis, looking at the Society’s strengths and weaknesses, the opportunities we have, the threats and the constraints. As a Professor of Information and Library Management, I was delighted to see SI adopting a truly management approach. Priorities were established for marketing, training, research and administration. Several interesting ideas were put forward, but a word of warning: one of the features of that popular management technique MBO (management by objectives) is that objectives must be realistic; we must be realistic about putting our plans into action. We must also beware of rushing into things, and ‘make haste slowly’, as the vicar of a church at which I once worshipped said—though not so slowly as we sometimes have done.

Among the many happy events during my four years as President, I should like to mention two and link them with my hopes for the Society’s future. I was delighted to be invited to talk to the Scottish Group in my favourite city, Edinburgh. In my earlier Guest Editorial I had expressed the hope that other regional groups would be established to follow the excellent example of our Scottish friends, and written that the inaugural meeting of the North-Western Group (UK) would have been held by the time my editorial was published. The North-Western Group is now well and truly in existence and very active.
thanks to SI's new Vice-President, Connie Tyler. Can we please have Groups in other parts of the UK?

The other event to which I wish to refer is my visit to the American Society of Indexers' 21st Annual General Meeting in San Francisco—followed, I am delighted to say, by the attendance of several American friends and colleagues at the successful SI conference in Edinburgh in 1990. In my talk to ASI, I called for greater co-operation between the parent society and the three affiliated societies. This is happening, but what about Europe? 1992 is now upon us and we must develop our European links—but how? Almost certainly Britain is ahead of the rest of Europe as regards back-of-the-book indexing—especially if European Community publications are anything to go by—so we must take the lead. Contacts need to be developed, and there are hopeful signs. For example, a Danish lady, Hanne Albrechtsen, whom I had the pleasure of meeting at the ISKO (International Society for Knowledge Organization) conference in Darmstadt in 1991, has now joined SI and will speak at SI's Chester conference in July 1992. A German member of ISKO, Robert Fugmann, has also written to request details of SI.

We have strong links with Yugoslavia, of course, thanks to John Gibson, who organized the first Anglo-Yugoslav conference on indexing in 1989. It is a tragedy that, for obvious reasons, a similar conference planned for 1991 had to be cancelled, and our hearts go out to our Yugoslav friends.

The parent Society must be the prime mover in the formation of a European Society of Indexers and, as the Yugoslav experience has shown, this need not (should not) be confined to Western Europe.

Several years ago John Gordon stressed the need for a permanent office and paid Secretary for SI. We must work towards this, especially if we are to take the leading role internationally that we should.

I should like to see progress in the development of a code of conduct for indexers, which would raise the status of the Society in the eyes of publishers, our main employers. Two other professional bodies of which I am a member, the Library Association and the British Institute of Management, have such a code.

Thanks to all members of SI for having me as your President, to officers and members for your support during my period of office, congratulations on your selection of Professor David Crystal as SI's next President, and good wishes to him for as enjoyable a period of office as I had. SI is in good hands and in good shape. Its future is rosy and I look forward to being part of it in some way.

Ken Bakewell

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### Coming events

#### 1992

- **22–23 May** American Society of Indexers 24th annual meeting. Menger Hotel, San Antonio, Texas, USA. Conference Chair: Linda K. Fetters, P.O. Box 386, Port Aransas, TX 78373. Tel: (512) 749-6634.

- **6–11 June** Special Libraries Association 83rd annual conference. Moscone Convention Center, San Francisco, CA, USA.

- **17–19 July** Society of Indexers' conference, Chester College, Chester. Details from Mrs. C. Tyler, The Kopje, Wybunbury Lane, Stapeley, Nantwich CW5 7JP.

#### 1993

- **20–22 May** American Society of Indexers 25th anniversary meeting. Old Colony Inn, Alexandria, Virginia, USA. Conference Chair: Nancy Mulvany, 265 Arlington Avenue, Kensington, CA 94707. Tel: (415) 524-4195.

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### Worshipful IT

The Worshipful Company of Information Technologists has been formed and recognized as the hundredth livery company of the City of London, holding its first meeting at Guildhall in January 1992. Its 316 freemen include Sir Brian Jenkins, Lord Mayor of London and an acknowledged expert in computer auditing, and Lord Weinstock, chairman of GEC. Bernard Harty, chamberlain of the City of London and head of the City corporation's information technology strategy and application team, is a co-founder. The company arms, specially designed, feature keys (of knowledge) and stars (to represent satellites) with Mercury, god of communications, and Pegasus, who gave his name to the first computer, as supporters; their livery robes will be of green (for the globe) and gold (for conductivity).

The livery companies are descended from the craft guilds and trade associations which regulated medieval trade. To achieve livery status they must show a minimum of £100,000 in charitable funds and a record of charitable and educational good works. Gutenberg and Caxton would surely approve.