

This, the first issue of the twentieth volume of *The Indexer*, begins the thirty-ninth year of publication with a new format and an almost new editorial team. Hazel Bell resigned as editor in October, after eighteen years' service in the best of editorial traditions: as facilitator, innovator, gatekeeper, and — best of all — subversive. Hans Wellisch and Ken Bakewell pay tribute to her elsewhere in this issue. We are grateful to Hazel for her continuing enthusiasm in helping to prepare this issue, as well as contributing to it, and promising many future contributions. Hazel will continue her series *Index makers of today* and *The Indexer 30 years ago*. The Reverend Norman Hillyer retires as editor of *Indexes reviewed* after this issue, and will be succeeded by Christine Shuttleworth. Please keep those index reviews coming!

Janet Shuter and Nancy Mulvany succeed Hazel as editor: more precisely, Janet is editor and Nancy associate editor. The logistics of editing a journal from the Isle of Wight and California are much simplified by email, and this is helping to bring us closer to correspondents in Australia and Canada. One of our hopes for the future is for more active involvement of indexers in the Pacific countries and Africa in the journal. The division of labour between the two editors is broadly that Nancy will handle full-length articles, and Janet features, short items, and journal production. To reflect this division, we discuss these issues separately below:

NANCY:

During this period of transition we would like to solicit your views. What do you like and/or dislike about *The Indexer*? What type of articles would you like to see us add? What type of article do you tend to read? What kind do you skip? We want and welcome your input.

Not only is this journal in transition, but our profession is in transition. We have all heard of the paperless office, the death of the book, and the end of reading. None of these predictions have come to pass, and yet there is a general feeling among some of our colleagues that indexing is threatened. Technical indexing jobs disappear because the material is going online and therefore “doesn't need an index.” Part of the fun of Web surfing is the tangential links we follow, in turn forgetting what it was we were looking for in the first place. Once we forget what it was we were looking for, we won't be disappointed at not finding it. Boolean search engines that were once the province of pricey online databases are now available on the Internet to anyone who can select the link and then figure out how to construct a search statement.

In the meantime, the international print publishing industry shows no signs of slowing down. Books are being published, indexes are being written. Periodicals are being published, indexes are being written. At the same time, there is an explosion of opportunities in online media for the application of information access structure design. The need for sound and efficient access to information has never been greater than it is today. We want to spread this message throughout the pages of *The Indexer*. We want to hear from those of you who have 'reinvented' yourselves. Are you a Web page designer? Are you an information access provider? Share your experiences with us.

We envision *The Indexer* moving forward with you during this time of change. However, it is important to keep in mind that a craft as old as ours does not change without a dedication to continuity. What we are today is a cumulation of all we have been.

This journal has been a witness to both change and consistency in indexing practice for the past thirty-eight years. Much space has been devoted to indexes written long before our time. We wish to continue this historical perspective as it adds depth to our field of view.

We have marvelled at the articles devoted to what some may call peculiar indexing projects. And yet, in each article there is something to learn. Please continue to share your experiences about the seemingly eccentric applications of indexing.

JANET:

I want to encourage readers to send in short items about unusual or innovative indexing projects, problems — and solutions if any, new uses for indexing or other software: anything that can help us keep indexing at the leading edge. In the UK we are certainly noticing that finally the information in IT is coming to the fore and, as Nancy says, this is where indexers have an important role. By the way, anyone who has access to CIX can join the 'Indexer' conference to exchange views and information with other indexers.

We have changed the format of the journal to A4 (a standard European paper size) to improve page readability and keep costs down. The next issue will be produced entirely from disk with Ventura Professional type formatting software and sent to the printer camera-ready. Most contributors are already sending us material on disk, but do not be deterred if you cannot do so. Please refer to the inside front cover for *Notes for contributors*.

WHO ARE WE?

NANCY MULVANY is a former President of the American Society of Indexers and before that a long-serving member of its board. She has been involved with book and periodical indexing, hypertext index design, and index project management. She is the author of *Indexing books* (University of Chicago Press: 1994) and teaches for the USDA Graduate School's Correspondence Study Program and the University of California Berkeley Extension Program. You can read more about her in *Index makers of today* in this issue.

JANET SHUTER is not really an indexer at all, although she did recently design and edit the 120,000 term index to the Universal Decimal Classification (BS1000M: 1993). She was Chair of the Society of Indexers from 1985 to 1990, and has succeeded Ken Bakewell as chair of the British Standards Committee IDT/2 dealing with indexing, alphabetisation and thesauri. For a living, she mainly designs and maintains subject structures for large information databases. She is delighted to say that one of her products, SUPERLINK, is already being used for Internet searching, and is intended to underpin the proposed UK Search Engine for the WWW.