

Around the world

Glenda Browne

I have taken over this column after the sudden death of Christie Theron (see the obituary on page 148). I met Christie at the SI conference at Cheltenham. He was enthusiastic about books and England and indexing, and delighted with a visit he had just made to Hay-on-Wye, the second-hand bookshop town. It had been one of our favourite spots too. A review of his 'Around the world' columns also highlights his love of cricket and rugby. The sympathy of the international indexing community goes to his family and colleagues in South Africa.

As you will see, we continue to experiment with how best to organize this material. We want to concentrate on providing information that is not readily available elsewhere, in particular on the various societies' websites, so conferences are mentioned only briefly at the very end of the Societies section, under a separate heading. We also want to try to convey a sense of what each of the societies is doing, what they see as the high points of the last 6 to 12 months, what their plans are for the future, and also where the similarities and differences are, and what tips we might pick up from one another. So my idea is to have two sections, 'From the societies' and 'Other news'. (Actually there is no other news this issue, but perhaps next time.)

From the societies

ASI

A new online course, 'Indexing: theory and application' is being offered by the University of California (Berkeley). This and other training opportunities in the United States are listed on Janet Perlman's recently updated website (www.sw-indexing.com/6-resources.html).

The South Central Chapter of ASI held its autumn meeting in San Antonio, Texas on 30 October 2004. Their program was a six-hour seminar entitled 'Facing the text' presented by Do Mi Stauber, based on her latest book. The hotel they met at was a few blocks from the famous Alamo Mission where Texas began its fight for independence from Mexico.

The Washington, DC Chapter of ASI has held a number of outreach programmes co-hosted by local organizations. They included local Taxonomy Tuesdays, Indexing pictures using the thesaurus for graphic materials, held at the Library of Congress, and AARP information resources on the Internet, at which they learned about the AgeLine database and the Internet Resources on Aging collection. They also held a booth at the Fall for the Book Festival in Fairfax, Va. The May program will be held at the Textile Museum to learn about its database program.

In addition to such organization-based programmes, the chapter has a number of initiatives in place to help new members feel welcome: conference mentors for new members at the ASI national conference; a column welcoming new members for each newsletter issue; and an

official welcome person (Cathy Dettmar) at chapter programmes. And last fall the chapter offered Barbara DeGennaro's excellent and very popular programme, Getting started in indexing, along with Becky Hornyak's comprehensive overview of peer review methods.

On October 23, 2004 the Twin Cities Chapter of ASI hosted a 'Basic web design for literary freelancers' workshop presented by member Maria Fracchia. Workshop participants were introduced to basic design concepts and warned of common pitfalls, including the use of graphics that cannot be displayed properly on all platforms.

The Western New York Chapter of ASI has been making an effort to include indexing students from local universities at chapter meetings. In the fall of 2003, they met with indexing students at Syracuse University, while at their fall 2004 meeting they met with indexing students from the Department of Library and Information Science School of Informatics at the State University of New York at Buffalo. Professor Abbas and eight students traveled from Buffalo to meet with the group in Skaneateles, NY. In the photo Chapter President Peg Mauer is on the far right (in ASI polo shirt) and Professor Abbas is to her right (in the middle row) wearing glasses and a black top.



Heather Hedden (heather@hedden.net) has proposed the revitalization of the Web Indexing SIG, with possible creation of a website, database and mailing list.

ANZSI

The Australian Society of Indexers (AusSI) has now become the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers (ANZSI). In July, the Auckland and Wellington branches of the Local Publishers Forum assisted in bringing AusSI member Max McMaster to both cities to run indexing courses.

Participants at meetings with Max agreed to form one New Zealand branch of AusSI, and this was approved by the AusSI National Committee. Current activities include organizing an indexing course in Nelson in February; a

media launch and release of the Freelancer Register to publishers in Wellington in March; and developing the mentoring scheme.

The Victorian branch of ANZSI has started a mentoring programme in which books without indexes are indexed by beginner indexers under supervision, and then made available for purchase. The ACT branch is planning to introduce a similar scheme this year, and the New Zealand branch is also considering the idea.

In May the Victorian branch of ANZSI toured the archival collection of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons, examining surgical instruments, paintings, diaries and the Cowlshaw Collection of historical medical books. Their next tour was to the State Coal Mine at Wonthaggi, along with members of local historical societies. A book on the mine had been the subject of a DIY indexing (mentoring) project, and the 'best fit' index from all the participants (put together by John Simkin) was presented to the mine.

The big project of the NSW Branch of ANZSI for 2004 was project management of the redesign of the ANZSI website. This has involved examination of content as well as the structure of the site. Feedback has been gathered through a survey of ANZSI members and focus groups with potential users of the site (such as editors). The project has run under the leadership of Caroline Colton with technical expertise from Helen Skewes.

ASAIB

ASAIB has published a new book, *Indexing for Southern Africa: a celebration of ASAIB's first decade 1994–2004*, edited by Jacqueline A Kalley and Elna Schoeman. Enquiries: Marlene Burger (burgem@unisa.ac.za). Special fields covered include Africana, antique maps, archives, education, environmental issues, health sciences, labour, languages, law, literature for children, museum objects, national bibliographies, newspapers, politics and international relations, and training opportunities.

CSI

The Second National Congress of the China Society of Indexers was held in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province of China in November 2003. Professor Xu Zhong, Vice-President of Fudan University, was elected President, and the Secretariat has relocated from the East China Normal University to Fudan University.

The Annual Conference of the China Society of Indexers for 2004 was held in Xiamen, Fujian Province of China in November 2004. The theme was 'Indexes should be geared to the society, to the people, and to the life'. More than 70 delegates attended the conference, and they enthusiastically discussed and exchanged views on their experiences of indexing.

The CSI's 2005 Annual Conference will be held in Fudan University, Shanghai, China, in October 2005. Delegates from overseas societies are warmly welcomed to attend this conference. See their website (www.cnindex.fudan.edu.cn) for pictures of their 2004 conference and details of future events. You can get a translation of the text, section by section, from <http://babelfish.altavista.com>.

The CSI's journal was launched in 2003 with Professor Zhang Qiyu as Chief Editor. The journal includes the columns 'Index and database forum', 'Research on indexes and databases', 'Research on the retrieval tools for Internet information', 'Research on index language', 'Introduction to indexes and databases', and 'The databases in our daily life'.

German Network of Indexers (DNI)

The German Network of Indexers (DNI), which got off the ground last summer, had a successful debut meeting at last year's Frankfurt Book Fair in October. Since then, membership has risen to ten. The first e-newsletter was sent in March. More contents have been added to the website (www.d-indexer.org), especially to the bibliography page which now consists of more than 60 entries, including articles about the 16th-century indexer Conrad Gessner and Alexander von Humboldt's views on indexing.

IASC/SCAD

The IASC/SCAD Calgary conference included sessions by Nancy Mulvany, Gale Rhodes and Fred Brown as well as a seminar on 'Intermediate/advanced indexing' by Kari Kells, based on participants' different approaches to indexing the same document. The indexes and handouts are available at Kari's website (www.indexw.com/IASC/).

Membership continues to grow, with 137 members as of January 2005. Concentrations are in the west (British Columbia and Alberta) and in Central Canada (Ontario) and Quebec, with only handfuls of members elsewhere. There are 12 members living in the United States, many of whom have dual membership of ASI and IASC/SCAD.

The British Columbia and Central Canada groups have been active with meetings and fostering local contacts, indexer to indexer as well as with interested outsiders. A BC member spoke to an editors' meeting regarding the indexing process. The Central Canada group has found an affordable meeting room in Toronto – they had been meeting in restaurants, with all the attendant interruptions – and plan to schedule four meetings a year.

Netherlands Indexing Network (NIN)

The NIN is happy to announce the launch of the Netherlands Indexing Network (NIN) (www.indexers.nl). This is an independent and informal network of indexers. Any indexer, or would-be indexer, living in the Netherlands or working in the Dutch language is most welcome to join, by sending an email message to: info@indexers.nl.

SI

Following a wide-ranging review carried out in 2003, SI has seen considerable changes in its organizational structure. To help reduce the workload on volunteers and run the society more professionally, administrative functions are being centralized as far as possible in the Sheffield office. A small Executive Board has replaced the rather unwieldy Council, thus facilitating more efficient policy making. And through

the establishment of a new body, the Consultative Council, the grass-roots membership now has a formal channel through which it can be involved in the policy-making process. The new arrangements are still bedding down.

Another new development for SI is the first issue of its directory (*Indexers Available*) in CD-ROM format. Users without ready access to the online version on the SI website can now benefit from a range of additional features compared with the previous printed version, including more extensive information on commissioning indexes and a selection of reviewers' comments on indexes both good and bad.

Iain Brown, who took over as SI Webmaster at the beginning of 2005, has been developing a content management system (CMS) to run the SI website. Roll-out is scheduled for mid-year.

Otherwise things have continued much as usual, with a wide range of workshops, a good flow of new indexers qualifying for accreditation under either SI's own training programme or other approved means, and local group meetings. The key event on the horizon is the celebration in 2007 of the 50th anniversary of the founding of SI.

Conferences

ANZSI (March; Melbourne), ASI (May; Pasadena, California), China Society of Indexers (October; Shanghai), SI (July; Exeter, Devon) and ASAIB (July; Durban, KwaZulu-Natal) are all running conferences this year. Details are on the societies' websites. IASC/SCAD and ASI are planning a joint conference in Toronto in 2006.

Across the boundaries

For many years SI has run a correspondence training course, now available on CD-ROM with accompanying booklets. ASI is planning to lease the course and create an

American version, while IASC/SCAD is considering a scheme whereby members would buy the course from SI, although the record of their achievement would be kept in Canada. Some issues still to be resolved are whether successful completion of the course would lead to 'accreditation' status, what should be done about the country-specific aspects of the course (such as taxation law, and use of the British standard) and whether there would be local support for students taking the course (*IASC/SCAD Bulletin*, Summer 2004: 14–15).

The proposal by Janet Shuter (SI) for an international good practice website has been turned into reality with the launch of an initial site at www.aboutindexing.info. To promote its use by developers internationally, the aboutindexing.info website uses a WikiWikiWeb, that is, an 'open-editing' system where the emphasis is on collaboration on documents rather than the simple browsing or viewing of them.

The detailed proposal for a good practice resource is on the site. Anyone is welcome to add comments to the site itself, but people interested in helping with development might like to email Janet (shuter@cix.co.uk).

And finally

Thanks to Qin Banglian, Seth Maislin, Tordis Flath, Jane Coulter, Noeline Bridge, and Madely du Preez for contributions to this column. Thanks also to people who sent information to these corresponding members. Apologies for material I have had to cut severely for space reasons.

If you know of any interesting indexing events which you think might be included in a future issue, please send details to your corresponding member (details on the inside front cover of *The Indexer*) or directly to me at world@theindexer.org. It would be particularly helpful to have material for 'Other news' (that is, non-society news).

The policemen of literature

In his column in the *Boston Globe* of 21 October 2004, Alex Bream wrote:

A reader writes: "It may be time for a witty column on 'Whatever Happened to the Index?' I love Jim [James] Carroll dearly, but his publisher has cashiered the index for his newest book, 'Crusade: Chronicles of an Unjust War,' leaving those who might want to rely upon his words searching through the entire book for the desired point."

Indexes, subject of. They might be called the policemen of literature; they never seem to be around when you need them. (Although Carroll said in an interview he didn't think "Crusade," a collection of columns, needed an index.) My Bible doesn't come with an index, which would come in handy when trying to untangle the two Lazarus stories, or for that matter the various Simons and Marys. "Common Ground," J. Anthony Lukas's biblical account of Boston's racial politics in the 1960s and 1970s, was published without an index, much to the chagrin of many locals mentioned therein.

There are books no one would dream of reading, but a quick trip through the index would be quite rewarding. The

classic example is "The Andy Warhol Diaries" for which both *Spy* and *Fame* magazines published pullout indexes in 1989. *Spy*'s is better remembered, perhaps for entries such as these: "Beatty, Warren . . . called disgusting by Jacqueline Onassis for mysterious act in hallway," or "Nureyev, Rudolf . . . awful dancing of."

I assumed that a trawl of the reviews of Carroll's book would produce a clutch of complaints about the lack of an index. Not at all: not a single mention of the problem mentioned by Bream's reader. But if it is true (*Dolhenty Archive 22 October 2004* at <http://radicalacademy.com/bookreviewcarroll.htm>) that

This is a book not to be read in one sitting, but to be read in fits and spurts. Publications of this type, reprintings of essays without a logical common thread binding them all together, can be difficult to handle all at one time.

Perhaps an index would indeed have helped.

MM