Obituaries

Audrey Judkins

Many society members will be aware of the death, in October 2004, of Audrey Judkins. Many will have known her and will have personal memories of her quiet, kind and practical character, but because of her modesty, few will be aware of all her achievements.

While bringing up a family in Hartlepool she worked as a bursar in a large comprehensive school. She studied with the Open University and, in 1988, gained a BA before taking courses in indexing. She was accredited by the SI and qualified with BIPT which provided her with a broad-based and thorough training.

History was Audrey’s main interest but her choice of specialist subjects included management and business, social sciences and ecology. Her academic understanding enabled her to compile indexes to titles such as Accounts demystified and Business policy, while her practical skills made her an invaluable member of the North East group for which she was treasurer. Her contribution to the very successful 1998 Tynemouth conference is recalled fondly by fellow organizers, Liz Cook and Drusilla Calvert.

In 1999 Audrey moved to Alton in Hampshire to be near her son, Martin, and his young family. Since she had had a long interest in the life and work of Jane Austen, it was a happy coincidence that her new home was only a mile from Chawton, famed as the Austen family’s village. Audrey volunteered to work in the library (originally the kitchen of Jane’s cottage), which gave her yet another opportunity for intellectual nourishment as well as providing a service for current and future researchers. Her remit was to bring together the information contained in the numerous books and journals by or about Jane into one single index using a complex classification system designed by the curator. In the article ‘Below stairs’ in Sidelights (Winter 2002), Audrey describes the demands and rewards of this enormous task and the pleasure she derived from meeting other Austen aficionados from places as far away as China and America.

Her knowledge and experience as an indexer of historical works made her the perfect choice to write an article for the reference starting points series in Sidelights (Winter 2001). In this she relates with obvious delight the story of finding an original 1879 copy of Wheatley’s What is an index? in a Hay-on-Wye bookshop. This volume has subsequently been reissued by the SI.

Audrey’s other achievements and interests were varied. As a young woman she was a top road racing cyclist, and after retirement became an enthusiastic swimmer, clocking up over one million lengths. She was very active in the St John Ambulance Brigade. She led a team which won the National final of their first aid competition in 1963 and spent many hours performing voluntary duties at various public events before becoming Area President for Durham. After retiring, she became an Officer Sister of the Order of St John of Jerusalem. In Alton she taught reading to primary school children and took an interest in her son’s flying career, often following Martin on gliding trips from Lasham airfield around the local countryside.

The Hampshire group, which Audrey founded following the 2001 Cambridge conference, will miss her company and gentle style of leadership.

Elizabeth Ball

Christie Theron

It was with great sadness we received the news of Christie Theron’s passing away on Sunday, 2 January 2005. Christie had been a lecturer in the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa since 1979. As a long-term member of LIASA (the Library and Information Association of South Africa), he was committed to its vision and willingly served on the Representative Council as Chairman of the Research, Education and Training Interest Group (RETI) for the 2002–04 term.

Christie had been a member of the Executive Committee of ASAIB (the Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers) for the past five years. He was also responsible for The Indexer’s ‘Around the world’ column. His loyalty, enthusiasm and sense of humour will certainly be missed.

Christie had a passion for book collecting, information technology and philosophy. At the time of his death, he was writing a thesis on ‘Separate personal book collections in urban public and university libraries in South Africa’. He was especially interested in Africana and Afrikaans literature, and has built up an extensive personal book collection over the years.

Marlene Burger, ASAIB Chairperson

Frank Merrett

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden death on 12 March 2005 of Dr Frank Merrett. Frank played an important part in the life of SI, most notably as Treasurer, a post from which he had only recently retired. He was The Indexer subscriptions manager, a post he still held at the time of his death. He was also heavily involved in organizing the 2002 SI conference in Cheltenham. In everything he did Frank showed both enthusiasm and determination, and we have much to thank him for.

A full obituary will be provided in the October 2005 issue.

Maureen MacGlashan