

Around the world

Glenda Browne

From the societies

ANZSI

In the last six months, the ANZSI ACT Region branch held a dinner post mortem to compare notes on problems with annual report indexing (an important indexing role in our national capital). Bobbi Graham spoke at the AGM of her experience in electronic publishing, particularly at the Australian National University E-press, and a visiting family of black swans enlivened the Christmas barbecue brunch at Lennox Gardens.

The New Zealand branch has its first mentee, with two more in the pipeline, awaiting mentors. Tordis Flath has remained as president, with Lynne Cobine as vice-president, Jenny Hart as treasurer, and Jill Gallop as secretary.

ASAIB

ASAIB now has 152 members. Their AGM was a breakfast at the Wits Club, with children's book illustrator Joan Rankin as speaker. They held a workshop on indexing basics for small indexing projects before a library conference, and the Centre for Information Literacy, University of Cape Town, presented two workshops by Peter Underwood on evaluating e-books and managing e-book collections.

ASAIB is the first of our societies to publish a blog (<http://www.saindexers.blogspot.com>). The ASAIB newsletter, messages and reports of events are posted there, and updating is usually quicker than on the Web site. ASAIB has completed its manual, *Indexing for Southern Africa*, edited by Jacqueline Kalley, Elna Schoeman and Marlene Burger. The executive committee has compiled all the conference proceedings for 1994–2004 in a single volume, to be published in 2006.

In 2006 ASAIB will be investigating: better marketing strategies; Web indexing; and more international participation.

ASI

The DC chapter of ASI has planned a group indexing project, to create a *pro bono* index by committee. Each group indexes a portion of a short publication, then the partial indexes are combined and edited.

The DC chapter is working on sales items, including a smaller back-window car sticker (to replace their current bumper stickers) and bookmarks which could be handed out to the public.

CSI

The CSI 2005 Annual Conference/Symposium was held in Fudan University, Shanghai, from 26 to 28 October 2005.

The theme of the conference was *Index and database: development and innovation*. During the conference, exhibitions of index products in China and the history of Chinese indexing were held to promote the publications and public understanding of indexes. Topic discussions and exchanges of views were divided into two sections, based either on the exhibits or the talks.

About 100 delegates from more than 70 units attended the conference. Overseas guests included Japanese index expert Matsuura Taka, and ASI representatives Richard Shroul and Peter Rooney, who spoke on the state of indexing in the United States and on the translation of indexes.

The opening ceremony was held in the conference hall of the American Studies Centre, Fudan University, and was presided over by the Secretary General of CSI, Shen Rusong. Chairman of the executive council of CSI Xu Zhong made the working report, and vice director Wei Haisheng addressed the conference on behalf of the Bureau of Translation and Edit of the Central Committee of the CCP, which is the superintendent of CSI.

The vice chairman of the executive council of CSI, Professor Zhang Qiyu, presented the major report: 'China index business: present setup and issues'. Organizations that were represented by speakers included: Fudan University Library; Shanghai People's Publishing House; Social Sciences Evaluation Centre, Nanjing University; China Science Evaluation Centre, Wuhan University; Military Science Academy; Nanjing Agriculture University; History Department, Fudan University; Yellow Pages Information Co. Ltd, China Telecom. To conclude, Professor Qiu Junping made a summary speech of the conference.

DNI

The German Network of Indexers (Deutsches Netzwerk der Indexer) held their second meeting and their first public



European indexers share experiences at the Frankfurt Book Fair
Photo credit: Dietmar Töpfer

event at the Frankfurt Book Fair (www.buchmesse.de/en/portal.php) on 20 October 2005. This year's highlight – the one-hour public event aimed at publishers, acquisitions editors, production managers, and copy-editors – covered modern aspects of professional indexing.

After a general introduction including the goals of DNI, indexing veteran Robert Fugmann gave a presentation about indexing basics, and pointed out the differences between true indexing and mere extraction of words from text – a misconception still widespread in Germany. Next, DNI member Walter Greulich, an editor and indexer for over twenty years, explained the situation of German indexing, also from the point of view of German publishers. Jacqueline Pitchford-Belder reported on the Netherlands Indexing Network, successfully founded at the end of 2004. Jill Halliday, international representative of the SI, talked about the Anglo-American indexing scene in general and the Society of Indexers in particular.

Jill Halliday writes:

The Book Fair is an amazing festival of publishing. Its function is principally marketing and opportunities for authors to contact publishers. The theme of the Fair was Korea. As well as Korean publishers and writers, there were exhibitions of Korean arts, food, papermaking and printing. A large proportion of the Fair was given to German publishers, but two vast halls were dedicated to English language and foreign publishers. Some of the smaller English-language publishers were unaware of the existence of indexing societies and registers of professional indexers, and were keen to get details of indexers in various subject specialisms.

IASC/SCAD

IASC/SCAD is looking for new ways in which their members can keep in touch with the Society and with each other. Other ongoing concerns include organizing their archives (looking backward), and designing a new logo (looking forward).

A committee made up of members across the country, and a smaller subcommittee in Toronto that meets every three to four weeks, are working on plans for the joint ASI/IASC conference. They will be giving this conference a Canadian stamp by including Canadian presenters and speakers from the literary and publishing world.

SI

The new structure of SI was fully implemented and refined during 2005. The Executive Board continues to meet four times a year to consider Society business, and everyone now has a proper job description. The registration system has been overhauled, and a new system, intended to make the qualification more meaningful to the publishing industry with a more logical progression from the training course, is to be introduced during 2006.

The Society continues with its programme of training workshops, and local groups participate in meetings ranging

from walks, visits and picnics through peer reviews, combined meetings with the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP) and discussions of freelancing concerns, to Christmas lunches. Trainees are encouraged to join local groups, and the strength of the new indexers coming into the Society was demonstrated when a group of 'Yellow Spots' from the 2004 Conference (so called because first-time Conference attendees are distinguished by a yellow dot on their name badges) guest-edited the October 2005 issue of *The Indexer*.

The Society's 2005–06 directory *Indexers Available* is now available online at www.indexers.org.uk/InAvail/index.htm. The entries are also fully searchable, in order that indexers with specialisms not in the standard list, or with relevant experience or particular interests may be found.

Conferences

Conferences are scheduled by ANZSI (16–17 March 2007, Melbourne), ASAIB (11–12 May 2006, Military Museum, Johannesburg, including visits to two libraries with outstanding Africana collections), ASI and IASC/SCAD (15–17 June 2006, Toronto, Ontario); and SI (7–9 July 2006, University of Durham, and 50th anniversary year, 13–16 July 2007, London).

The meeting of the international societies is scheduled for Thursday, 15 June 2006 in Toronto, before the opening dinner and reception of the joint ASI and IASC/SCAD conference. All indexing societies are asked to send a representative and to contact Seth Maislin (sethmaislin@gmail.com) with any questions.

Awards

ASAIB presented a special award to Beth Strachan for her outstanding work on South African bibliographies over a number of years. The ASAIB award for best index went to Marina Pearson for her index to the three-volume book *Infectious diseases of livestock*, edited by J. A. Coetzer and R. C. Tustun, and published by Oxford Southern Africa in 2004. The winner of the ASAIB Award for best bibliography went to Abdul Bemath for his book *The Mazruiana collection revisited: Ali A. Mazrui debating the African condition: an annotated and select thematic bibliography 1962–2003*, published by the Africa Institute of South Africa & New Dawn Press in 2005 (see review on p. 68). In 2006 a new category for electronic indexes and bibliographies will be added.

Other

Index to Tabari's Universal History

Alex Popovkin, in Brazil, has been working on the index to the 39-volume English translation of *Tabari's Universal History* (published by SUNY Press from 1981 to 1999) for the last five years. It takes up about 600 pages, and covers proper names (most of them transliterated from Arabic) and subjects. The original Arabic edition was published in Leiden at the end of 19th century.



Bibliotheca Persica
Edited by Ehsan Yar-Shater

The History of al-Ṭabarī (*Ta'riḫ al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*)

VOLUME XL

INDEX

Comprising an Index of Proper Names and
Subjects and an Index of Qur'ānic
Citations and Allusions

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Tyranny of distance

This section of ATW examines the issues that face small indexing societies with members spread over a vast area, and the solutions we have generated.

Executive committees

IASC/SCAD has executive members spread across Canada, and nominating committees make an effort to make sure that each region is represented. The executive usually includes isolated members as well as members from larger centres.

The ASI executive committee has board members spread around the country who can act as 'local representatives', attending meetings, reporting the national news and listening to concerns. For particularly important issues, some board members travel to larger meetings where there are no national representatives.

Members of the ASAIB Executive Committee are currently all situated in Johannesburg and Pretoria. The Committee meets once a month; email and the telephone are used for all other communications. The Western Cape Branch has its own committee and reports to the Executive Committee.

For many years the ANZSI (then AusSI) national committee was based in Melbourne, where the society had started. A few years after the NSW Branch was started, the core of the national committee started moving every few

years to a new branch. This makes it easier for the executive to get together for meetings, while input is also received from branches via email (and occasional visits), as all Branch presidents are *ex officio* members. With the ANZSI Committee in one place, other branches are freed up to take on specific roles such as conference organization and website assessment.

Electronic meetings

All of the societies have some formal or informal email communication. The IASC/SCAD executive now works completely by email. Executive e-meetings, during which issues are discussed and decisions made, are held about three times a year. Issues requiring immediate decisions between meetings are settled via the executive email forum. Many, but not all, executive members are able to attend the annual conference and AGM, at which time there is often an informal executive meeting.

Most national ASI business takes place through a year-round, ongoing mailing list using Roberts Rules (www.robertsrules.com). Motions can be made at any time, and members usually get a week for discussion and another week to vote. They try to have only one motion open at a time, use subject headers to identify motions, and contact people who fail to vote. Twice a year ASI also has a conference call.

The New Zealand branch of ANZSI has established an 'Electronic meeting' system. The president compiles the agenda and emails it to each committee member. They have five days to address the points raised. The president collates the responses, noting action points and other decisions. Electronic voting also makes it easier to get a quorum for AGMs, and to include Branch members from around the country. This year the NSW branch started using a chat client (mIRC) for online meetings.

Branches/chapters/members: communication and meetings

SI has a number of local groups which organize meetings within the local area. The consultative council of SI represents the views of members transmitted through local and special interest groups and the various committees of the Society, and has proved an effective forum for new ideas and comments on Society matters.

IASC/SCAD does not have a formal branch or chapter structure, but members in both Toronto and Vancouver have been holding meetings on a fairly regular schedule for a number of years. Local members also work together on specific projects – usually the organization of a workshop or a conference. IASC/SCAD also has a members mailing list.

ASI has a few large chapters and many medium-sized or small chapters, but there are still geographical regions where neither formal nor informal indexing peer groups exist. Because the United States is so large, groups of indexers often work together outside official chapters. The upside to this is greater involvement, more possibilities, and stronger local ties, while the downside is separation from the national society.

ASAIB has members from all over the Southern African region, including Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia. Most

members are from Gauteng (including Pretoria and Johannesburg), KwaZulu-Natal (mainly Durban and Pietermaritzburg) and the Western Cape (especially Cape Town). Mary Lennox is the chairperson of the Western Cape branch. The KwaZulu-Natal branch stopped functioning this year when the chairperson, Umashanie Reddy, emigrated to Canada.

ASAIB has been offering indexing training workshops for the past few years. Training will be presented in Botswana and Namibia during 2006 if there is enough interest, and if someone can help with the local organization of the session. People from Lesotho usually prefer to go to Johannesburg or Pretoria for training.

ASAIB has a mailing list, which is hosted by Sabinet free of charge. The list is mainly used by the executive committee to post messages to ASAIB members. This is a pity, as all ASAIB members are free to post messages, but only a few do so.

The ACT branch in Australia finds that attendance at meetings is smaller than they would like. They have put this down to the nature and aims of the membership (e.g. retired people interested in reading the newsletter, rather than pursuing an active career).

Nature of indexing and bibliography work

Countries like Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia do not have the infrastructure South Africa has, which could impact on who compiles the bibliographies, who pays for them and the available funds. The language also affects the work; for example, Shelagh Willet's annotated bibliography *The Khoeg and San* included exclamation marks (!) and click sounds.

In South Africa the *National Bibliography of South Africa* is compiled and produced by the National Library. The National Library has also had other bibliography projects, such as the compilation of a Tswana bibliography and a Zulu bibliography.

Indexing for databases like *ISAP (Index of South African Periodicals)* and *NISC SA (National Inquiry Services Centre)* is mainly in English. The *ISAP* database includes Afrikaans journals, but they are indexed in English. Most South African library catalogues are also English. The National Library and the University of Pretoria used to have Afrikaans catalogues as well, but with online cataloguing systems this is no longer feasible.

Most academic books published in South Africa are in English and a few in Afrikaans. Writers in African languages, particularly those such as Venda and Swahili which have relatively few speakers, often write in English because of the larger potential readership.

Isolation from other members and clients

The individuals most affected by the tyranny of distance are indexers with no society in their home country or region, and those who are based far from other indexers and indexing meetings. These indexers can join a society in another country, and rely on print and electronic communication. On the other hand, being far from other indexers could be an advantage as you have a monopoly on local supply, and

living far from major centres in areas with lower costs of living can also be an advantage. Isolation also involves distances between indexers and their clients, who may prefer working with local contractors.

Gauteng, and the Western Cape are the regions where the most important South African publishers are situated. This benefits communication between colleagues and clients. The ASAIB Directory of Freelance Indexers assists prospective clients in selecting indexers who live close by, if that is a priority. The ASAIB Committee has received a number of requests for references to indexers who would be able to assist in indexing projects that are not related to the printing industry (like, for example, the indexing of a collection of documents that are available within a specific institution in order to make the documents more accessible to the institution itself).

The majority of ASAIB members have access to the Internet, and therefore have email addresses. Since ASDL technology has only recently become available to South Africans and until quite recently has been very expensive, most indexers are not online but have dial-up connections – this is quite affordable provided not much time is spent online or the indexer connects to the Internet after hours when telephone tariffs are lower. This is one of the reasons why it is currently not feasible for ASAIB to offer online training courses.

As I look out of my window at the honeyeaters feeding on the banksias, I say thank heavens for electronic communication, which lets me manage the tyranny of distance.

Acknowledgements

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In memoriam

Bob Foley

The Society of Indexers was shocked to learn of the sudden death of its newly appointed newsletter editor, Bob Foley. A graduate of Oxford University (his DPhil was on 15th-century English poetry), he was also a Chartered Accountant and had been working as a writer and editor for many years, mainly on business-related material. At the time of his death he was running his own business, providing publishing-related services.

Tony Ridings

The Society of Indexer is sorry to announce the death at the age of 83 of H. Anthony (Tony) Rydings MBE, MA, ALA, on 15 March 2006 following a fall. Tony Rydings was a long-standing member of the Society, particularly active in what is now the independent Family and Local History Indexing Group and respected around the world for his work in that field.