

# International Committee of Representatives of Indexing Societies Informal Meeting, ASI and ISC/SCI Joint Conference, Chicago 16 June 2016

Present: Glenda Browne (ANZSI), Jenny de Wet (ASAIB), Caroline Diepeveen (NIN), Heather Ebbs (ISC/SCI), Maureen MacGlashan (SI and *The Indexer*), Mary Russell (Chair), Pilar Wyman (ASI), Sophie Yu (CSIDM)  
Guest: JoAnne Burek (ISC/SCI)

## 1. Welcome

Mary Russell, International Coordinator, opened the meeting at 4:09.

## 2. Introductions and Society News

Participants introduced themselves, and representatives gave a brief overview of news from their society or network.

**Heather:** ISC/SCI has made a lot of progress on its constitutional revision and hopes to have member discussions over the coming year, leading to ratification of the revision at next year's AGM. Membership is down slightly, to 103 (from the usual 115–120); it may be partly because the society usually experiences a bit of a bump in membership from whatever region hosts the annual conference. The 2017 AGM and conference will be held in Montreal, late May or early June.

**Pilar:** ASI membership is also down slightly, to about 450 to 500. Gwen Henson has settled in as Executive Director, and the society feels on solid footing again. They are discussing such issues as whether to continue with an annual conference or go to biennial; no commitment has yet been made for 2017. Specific chapters/regions do host their own meetings and workshops. The society is focusing on new indexers and thinking about ways to provide educational resources.

[Maureen noted that *The Indexer* uses the outside back cover to advertise conferences, so it is helpful to have any information at all on forthcoming conferences. It doesn't have to be complete or precise information, but any information helps.]

**Glenda:** ANZSI started out as a centralised organisation that gradually created branches, but last year they consolidated again into a central body with some regional groups. Overall, the new model is better for finances. They also have two interest groups—education and conference planning. For the education group, Glenda Browne has been keeping a list of potential courses. Thus far she has only a few expressions of interest in an indexing course, although in the past there were usually 10 or so by this time. This is of concern, as courses tended to bring new members to ANZSI. It's possible that if there is a New South Wales conference next year, they might try to attach training to it. People going to a conference may be more likely to want an intermediate-level course. [Pilar noted that

the beginner course attached to the current Chicago conference seemed to garner little interest till close to the event, when there was a large last-minute sign-up.]

ANZSI will be offering a medal again.

There is a group in Melbourne working on an index for the ANZSI newsletter; volunteers were given clear guidelines about what to do to index individual years. The first 20 years are being merged together and edited.

Membership is slightly down.

**Jenny:** **ASAIB** has about 140 members, but that probably does not accurately reflect the number of currently practising indexers, which may be about a third of that.

There are no university courses on indexing in South Africa, but ASAIB offers a four- to five-day progressive indexing course twice a year. The course progresses through beginner, intermediate and advanced indexer levels and goes on to thesaurus construction and e-pub indexing. It has worked quite well and can handle a number of different people at the same time. People don't have to do all five days at once. For about the past three years they have also offered a mentorship scheme for people who have completed at least one of the ASAIB training days; thus far there are just two mentors. The mentees pay a small administration fee; the mentors volunteer their time. [A small side discussion ensued about the global issue of volunteers putting in a lot of time to our respective societies. There are some people who are in a position where they can cope with the loss of income while they do volunteer work, but for others it is simply not an option.]

The next ASAIB conference and AGM will be in spring 2017.

They will be instituting an indexing award where they ask indexers to submit three books they have indexed in the last three years plus publisher style guides, with the award to be presented at their AGM.

**Sophie:** **CSIDM**, founded in 1991, is part of China's Central Compilation and Translation Bureau and is managed by Fudan University Library. There are over 1,000 members, most of whom come from one of three work areas: major libraries (there are 200 at Fudan University alone), the translation bureau and news broadcasting for publication. Members are from all provinces, and there are subcommittees at the regional level. There are also subcommittees for training compliance, research, propaganda and international liaison. The priorities of the society are indexing training, research on index methodology and standards, and bringing indexes to modern publications. Traditional Chinese literature does not contain indexes, so it is new and is associated with foreign literature.

The 2016 conference will be held 15 to 18 November in Guizhou (see attached pdf). The theme is Internet and Indexing, with four subthemes: modern techniques and technologies, continuous indexing education and improvement, higher education thesis indexing rules and regulations, and ethnic group literature indexing and databases. The registration deadline is 15 September.

Shanghai will be the location of the 2018 triennial; the date will probably be in October.

**Caroline:** **NIN** and **DNI** will hold a small joint conference on 20 October in conjunction with the Frankfurt Book Fair (see attached pdf). If it goes well, they might offer it again every three or five years. It is hoped that there will be other international indexers present in

addition to the presenters. Netherlands and Flanders are special themes for the Book Fair this year, and both DNI and NIN have existed more than 10 years.

NIN and DIN are reorganizing their website, which is on the verge of being launched. Their newsletter will be replaced with a blog, mainly written by Pierke Bosschieter and Caroline, but with other guest writers.

Several members will probably be retiring soon, so a few members may be lost; they recently had a new member join.

**Maureen:** SI members agreed at the York conference in 2015 that they would look into the possibility of some sort of formal relationship with the Society for Editors and Proofreaders (SfEP). Unfortunately, SfEP politely declined to pursue the idea further at this time. This was disappointing to many future-looking members of SI. However, the numbers, which had been falling at the rate of 10% a year for a number of years, seems to have held steady this year (at under 400), and the budget has improved.

The SI website and Indexers Available are at least 15 years old and have been tweaked a number of times, but it's time for a full revision.

A one-day conference will be held this year on 13 September in Birmingham.

### **3. The Indexer (Maureen)**

It has been a good year for *The Indexer*, with no particular problem getting material. The website has a good team. Rebecca Linford has been working on the underpinnings of the site, including the subscriber database.

The index to *The Indexer* is far behind, partly because of the lack of volunteer time and partly because of the need for hyperlinking. Nic Nicholas has prepared an index of contributors and titles for Maureen, but it needs to be fine-tuned before going public.

Future: It seems clear that the only way forward for the journal is to revisit the idea of outsourcing. It has been looked at and rejected twice, and there are negative aspects such as a loss of flexibility (e.g., in changing content up to the last), but the current volunteers cannot go on forever. Maureen is not prepared to look for another editor until such an individual can be paid. (Maureen has been editor for 12 years on a completely volunteer basis, and it's about three months of work per year.) With outsourcing, that cost would be built in.

It is hoped to recover some of the costs with more institutional subscriptions. There are 122 institutional subscribers, with 85 wanting both print and electronic editions.

### **4. Invitation to AFEPI Ireland to join ICRIS**

Mary asked if all societies could respond by the end of September to the proposal to invite the Association of Freelance Editors, Proofreaders and Indexers (Ireland) to join the International Agreement.

Members present agreed that they could get their boards' opinions/decisions by that time; however, discussion arose about the appropriate process for decision-making in ICRIS. Thus far, decisions have always been by consensus, but when the AFEPI consideration was raised, it was suggested that the decision be made by majority vote. There are fundamental differences between these two decision-making methods, and it is something that ICRIS needs to discuss further and include in our terms of reference.

## **5. New Business**

For the triennial, we need to consider how we make decisions (i.e., consensus or voting). It was further asked (but no discussion ensued) whether we need a mission statement or objectives.

## **6. Next Society Meetings**

- **SI:** 13 September 2016, SI AGM and Conference, The Studio, Birmingham
- **DNI and NIN:** 20th October 2016, joint DNI and NIN meeting at Frankfurt Book Fair

Meeting adjourned at about 5:10 p.m.

encl:

China Society of Indexers Invite You (pdf)

Frankfurt Flyer (pdf)