

Editorial

I haven't been everywhere, but it's on my list.

Susan Sontag

I am an inveterate traveller and Susan Sontag's quote is one of my favourites. The idea of going everywhere does not have to be limited to physical travel, though, and I often find myself going to new places through the pages of this journal. This issue is a good case in point, with contributions from an incredibly diverse group of people from around the world. We truly do live in a global village of indexers these days.

The issue begins with obituaries from South Africa and Germany. My thanks to Karin McGuirk for writing a lovely tribute to her mother, Marlene Burger, who was a pivotal member of the Association of Southern African Indexers and Bibliographers (ASAIB). I know this was not an easy task, and I extend my sympathy to her and her colleagues. ASAIB recently announced that it will incorporate its members into the Professional Editors' Guild (PEG).¹ I wish South African indexers an exciting future with this next step. Pausing to look back at the remarkable career and contributions of Marlene seems a fitting way to mark the end of this first period in ASAIB's history. We also bid farewell to Robert Fugmann, a founding member of the German Network of Indexers (Deutsches Netzwerk der Indexer, DNI). Jochen Fassbender writes that Robert will be 'sorely missed', which echoes Karin's words about her mother. Without these two dedicated and visionary people, indexing societies in South Africa and Germany may not have existed. *Vale*, Marlene and Robert, and thank you.

My great thanks also to Fujita Setsuko for her excellent article about book indexing in Japan and review of the Japanese translation of the index to Dennis Duncan's *Index, a history of the*. Thank you also to Jochen Fassbender for putting me in touch with Fujita Setsuko and encouraging her to write for *The Indexer*. I have wondered for a long time what became of the Japan Indexers Association, and I recently looked at its journal *Shoshi sakuin tenbō* in the National Library of Australia.² Sadly, I am unable to read Japanese and could not enjoy its contents, so I was thrilled to connect with an indexer in Japan willing to share her knowledge. I also very much appreciate Fujita Setsuko's ability to write in English and expertly review the index to Duncan's book. I hope you enjoy her article as much as I did.

We then jump back across the world to two articles from North American contributors. Iva Cheung considers the connections between qualitative research and book indexing, which is a topic also close to my heart. As a qualitative researcher, I have myself noticed similarities between the processes of coding in thematic analysis and book indexing, and I was delighted to watch her presentation about this at the Indexing Society of Canada/Société canadienne d'indexation (ISC/SCI) online conference. I think she has explained it well, and I agree with her that this type

of work could be yet another string to the bow for indexers. Speaking of which, is embedded indexing going to extend your reach professionally? Stephen Ullstrom and Enid Zafran conducted a survey to find out. Like Iva, their article originated in an ISC/SCI conference presentation. I appreciate their work on this research, particularly as they do not do embedded indexing themselves. As they say, indexers are often 'too busy to think about the future', and I appreciate their commitment to the development of our profession.

Across the pond in the UK, Hazel Bell continues her reflection on *The Indexer* 40 years ago (April 1985). The issue she reviews was guest-edited by the president of the Australian Society of Indexers (now known as the Australian and New Zealand Society of Indexers, ANZSI), and the international nature of the journal was already in full swing. I particularly enjoyed reading about the 8th International Online Information Meeting and its interest in artificial intelligence, which was also the theme of the China Society of Indexers conference (more about that report later). Many things may have a longer history than we know! Coincidentally, we also include a review of the book *Life as fiction: a biographic companion to the novels of J. L. Carr* that includes Hazel Bell's index to the novels. Our reviewer, Susan Penny, describes Hazel's index as 'a pleasure to use' and was also inspired by the book to spend a 'happy summer' rereading the novels. Thank you, Susan, for making book reviews sound like so much fun!³ I was also delighted to read Carlos Garcia-Jane's description of a detailed and useful index in his review of *Jesús Alturo i Perucho, filòleg, paleògraf, historiador de la cultura: breu bibliografia*. His description of the book as a 'beautiful little volume' produced with 'care and undoubtedly love and respect for the subject' also gave me hope for the future of publishing.

Although hosted by national indexing societies, the two conferences that we report on in this issue defy boundaries. Ann Kingdom and Tanya Izzard write about the Society of Indexers conference, which was held online and included presenters and participants from around the world. They base their report on Tanya's blog about the event,⁴ which also illustrates its global reach. Thank you to Kerryn Burgess and Madelon Nanninga for bringing together contributions from the international delegates in their wonderful report on the China Society of Indexers (CSI) conference in Beijing. Their descriptions of the presentations on artificial intelligence made me think more deeply about how it might be a useful and innovative tool. I loved reading about the panel discussion on international indexing and applaud CSI for including this session. The Beijing Library also looks amazing and is now definitely on my list of everywhere I want to go!

Finally, Ann Kingdom and I include our annual round-up of indexing awards in this issue. It always gives me pleasure to read about awards being presented for voluntary contributions by the amazing people who do such good work in the indexing societies. Congratulations to the winners, and I hope that reading about them will inspire others to go above and beyond for their profession.

Mary Coe

Notes

- 1 The announcement of ASAIB's incorporation into PEG can be found here: <https://asaib.org.za/wp-content/uploads/Announcement-of-incorporation-of-ASAIB-into-PEG.pdf> (accessed 19 December 2024).
- 2 The National Library of Australia's collection includes 20 volumes of the *Journal of the Japan Indexers Association* (*Shoshi sakuin tenbō*), published from 1977 to 1996, which contains over 4,000 pages of content.
- 3 If you are interested in reviewing a book for *The Indexer*, please contact our reviews editor, Madelon Nanninga, at reviews@theindexer.org.
- 4 Tanya Izzard's blog is at <https://www.indexers.org.uk/posts/human-indexing-in-a-digital-world-society-of-indexers-conference-18-19-september-2024/> (accessed 19 December 2024).