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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE SOCIETY OF INDEXERS (SI) (for immediate release)

Sword swallower meets The Indexer

The brainchild of Guardian journalist and editor of the Annals of Improbable Research, Marc Abrahams, the Ig Nobel awards celebrate research that 'first makes people laugh, and then makes them think'. Australian indexer Glenda Browne received this accolade last October for her article on the humble word 'the' and why it causes so much trouble for people trying to put things into alphabetical order. She shared the stage with, amongst others, Dan Meyer, fellow Ig Nobel winner for research into the injurious effects of sword-swallowing. Dan (aka 'Cap'n Cutless, Swashbucklin' Saber Swallower') was back on stage recently (and giving a practical demonstration of his skills!), as part of the 2008 Ig Nobel Road show touring the UK during Science and Engineering Week. This time he was sharing the platform with Maureen MacGlashan, editor of The Indexer, the journal in which Glenda's article was first published and which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year.

Joining the motley crowd of Ig Nobel award winners (whose research ranged from 'Scrotal asymmetry in man and in ancient sculpture' and 'The effect of country music on suicide' to 'Homosexual necrophilia in the mallard duck' and assembling the world's first periodic (four-legged) table) were fifteen members of the Society of Indexers, who entered into the spirit of the event by holding up letters that read 'INDEXERS UNITE'. 'We thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity to get across the idea that indexing is a serious business and that there are people who do it for a living,' said Maureen. 'Most importantly, we showed that we can laugh at ourselves for what we do and how we do it'.

Note for editors. The Indexer is the international journal of indexing published by the Society of Indexers on behalf of the indexing societies throughout the world. Now published quarterly and available online, it is essential reading for anyone concerned with information management across a wide range of formats. Full contents, index and sample articles (including Glenda Browne's article on the definite article) can be found at www.theindexer.org

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