HENRY BENJAMIN WHEATLEY
D.C.L., F.S.A.

(Born May 2nd, 1838,
died April 30th 1917)

Evelyn K. Green
grand-daughter of H. B. Wheatley

Henry Benjamin Wheatley was the posthumous son of Benjamin Robert Wheatley, book auctioneer of Piccadilly, and was brought up by a half-sister and half-brother Benjamin Robert, secretary of the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society, a well-known bibliographer. The two brothers catalogued the library of the Athenæum, and Henry prepared the catalogue of the Oxford and Cambridge Club. In 1861 he was made clerk to the Royal Society and during his many years there, was to all intents and purposes Librarian. In 1879 he became Assistant Secretary to the Royal Society of Arts, which office he held till he retired in 1908.

His tastes were varied: a subject specially studied by him was bibliography, and he made a choice collection of book-bindings. He is best known for his great edition of the Diary of Samuel Pepys, which is still the standard edition and was published by Bell in 1893. For this work the University of Durham conferred on him the honorary degree of D.C.L. He founded the Index Society and took part in founding the Library Association. He was Founder and Vice-President of the London Topographical Society. For many years, he was the Honorary Secretary and Treasurer of the Early English Text Society and a member of the Philological Society. He was also Prior of the Johnson Club, President of the Sette of Odd Volumes, the Hampstead Antiquarian and Historical Society, the Bibliographical Society and an association called ‘London Landmarks’; also he edited The Bibliographer.

He read papers before the Philological, New Shakespeare and Folklore Societies, and the Society of Arts. One of the several occasions on which he addressed the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society led to the placing of a monument to Pepys in the Church of Saint Olave, Hart Street. He founded the Samuel Pepys Club on May 26th in 1903—the 200th anniversary of Pepys’s death. This was a dining club, and dinners were held at the Clothworkers Hall in Seething Lane (Pepys having been a member of this
Company) until its destruction by enemy action during the second world war. At these dinners papers relating to various aspects of the diarist's life were read and music of this period performed.

At the time of his death Dr. Wheatley was engaged in preparing a life of Pepys, and his notes and papers, after passing through the hands of Dr. J. R. Tanner, came into the possession of Mr. Arthur Bryant, who acknowledged his debt to both these Pepysian scholars in the preface to the first volume of his life of Samuel Pepys.

Bibliography of works by H. B. Wheatley

Compiled by L. M. Harrod.

Books and separately published works

The Adelphi and its site. 17 pp. Elliot Stock, 1885.

Bookbinding considered as a fine art, mechanical art, and manufacture. 27 pp. Elliot Stock, 1882.

The Dedication of books to patron and friend, etc. Elliot Stock, 1887. (The Book-Lover's Library.)

The Early history of the Royal Society. 53 pp. 1882.

Opuscula, privately printed by Stephen Austin & Sons, Hertford, and issued by the members of the Sette of Odd Volumes.


A Handbook of art industries in pottery and the precious metals. Sampson Low, 1886.

Historical portraits: some notes on the painted portraits of celebrated characters of England, Scotland and Ireland. Bell, 1897.

Two parts in 1 vol; pp. 1-146, Earthenware, Porcelain; pp. 1-222, Gold and Silver Smiths' Work.


How to catalogue a library. Elliot Stock, 1889. (The Book-Lover's Library.)

How to form a library. Elliot Stock, 1886. (The Book-Lover's Library.)

How to make an index. Elliot Stock, 1902. (The Book-Lover's Library.)

Index of obituary notices for the year 1880. Longmans, Green for the Index Society, 1882.

[Literary blunders: a chapter in the 'History of human error'. Elliot Stock, 1893. (The Book-Lover's Library.)


London past and present: its history, associations, and traditions. Based upon the 'Handbook of London' by the late Peter Cunningham. 3 vols. Murray, 1891.

Notes on the life of J. P. Collier; with a complete list of his works, and an account of such Shakespeare documents as are believed to be spurious. [Reprinted from The Bibliographer.] 67 pp. Elliot Stock, 1884.

Of anagrams. A monograph treating of their history from the earliest ages to the present time; with an introduction, containing numerous specimens of Macaronic poetry, punning mottoes, rhopalic, shaped, equivocal . . . verses, etc.

Printed for the author by Stephen Austin, Hertford. Sold by Williams & Norgate. 1862.

Prices of books: an inquiry into the changes in the price of books which have occurred in England at different periods. George Allen, 1898. (The Library Series.)

Remarkable bindings in the British Museum . . . described by H. B. Wheatley. Sampson Low, 1889.

Round about Piccadilly and Pall Mall; or a ramble from the Haymarket to Hyde Park, consisting of a retrospect of the various changes that have occurred in the Court End of London, etc. Smith, Elder, 1870.

Samuel Pepys and the world he lived in . . . Bickers, 1880.

Syllabus of a lecture, with an account of the unveiling of the Pepys Memorial in St. Olave's Church.

A Short history of Bond Street Old and New from the reign of King James II to the coronation of King George V . . . Also lists of the inhabitants in 1811, 1840 and 1911, and account of the coronation decorations, 1911. 35 pp. Fine Art Society. [1911.]

The Story of London. Dent, 1904. (Mediaeval Towns Series.)

What is an index? A few notes on indexes and indexers. Sotheran, 1878.
[2nd ed. Published for the Index Society by Longmans, Green, 1879. (Index Society Publications, No. 1.)]

Art work in gold and silver. Medieval. Sampson Low, 1882. (Handbooks of Practical Art.)

Art work in gold and silver. Modern. Sampson Low, 1882. (Handbooks of Practical Art.)

Art work in earthenware. Sampson Low, 1882. (Handbooks of Practical Art.)

Art work in porcelain. Sampson Low, 1883. (Handbooks of Practical Art.)

(To be continued.)

THE WHEATLEY MEDAL 1964

The Wheatley Medal offered by the Library Association is awarded annually on the recommendation of a joint committee of the Library Association and the Society of Indexers for an outstanding index published in the preceding year.

This year the medal was awarded to Mr. Guy Parsloe for his index to his own work, Wardens' accounts of the Worshipful Company of the Founders of the City of London 1497-1681. Transcribed, calendared and edited by Guy Parsloe, University of London, Athlone Press (£5 5s.)

It was presented to Mr. Parsloe at the Annual Conference of the Library Association held at Harrogate in May, 1965.

These accounts are the earliest surviving records of the Company and some of the earliest accounts in existence of any City Company. No other Company has yet published a continuous series of Wardens' accounts extending over nearly two centuries. Such an important historical document deserved the meticulous attention which its editor has given it and its riches are made accessible by a series of very full indexes.

The three indexes, which are preceded by a clear full explanatory note, consist of: (1) a general subject index; (2) a subject index to the Founders' Company; and
(3) an index of persons and places. A consideration of the material indexed and the types of use to which it is likely to be put will show the need for so many indexes. As the editor writes, ‘The General Subject Index should be consulted first unless the subject under study is some aspect of the history of the Founders’ Company itself or, of course, a person or place’. The general subject index contains entries such as Coals, Conduct money, Counsel learned in the law, Cream of Almonds, while the Founders’ Company subject index has entries such as Defence and regulation of craft, Feasts (with a number of sub-headings and sub-sub-headings), Finances, Fines (penalties).

Entries, e.g., Barrels, Mazers, Trivets, under the heading goods and furnishings (belonging to the Founders’ Company . . . . ) in the Founders’ Company Subject Index, appear under their own name in the general subject index. Their page references in the general subject index are usually to pages of the Founders’ Company Subject Index so that the subject index is mainly an index to an index.

The name index is clearly set out with surnames in capitals and cross references from variant forms. Entries for individuals are differentiated in ten ways, e.g., by ‘S’ with date, for election to office of Steward. Even so, there is often a series of entries with nothing to distinguish one from the other. However, the differentiation achieved is adequate for the type of material (published records, a primary source) and indeed a greater degree of differentiation could be achieved only by a disproportionate increase in the size of the index. (However, this should not be taken as meaning that with other types of material the present standard of differentiation would be adequate.)

With these indexes, not only those interested in the history of the Company but also social, economic and art historians and genealogists and onomastic scholars have the key to a rich source.

The indexes of two other books were singled out for special mention: P. M. Williams, Crisis and compromise: politics in the Fourth Republic (Third edition), Longmans, 55s., and the index by G. Norman Knight to Recommendations for the preparation of indexes for books, periodicals and other publications. British Standards Institution, 10s.

The first is well sub-divided, and by means of a well thought-out system of abbreviations conveys a great deal of useful biographical information in a short space, so that usually one can go at once to the page on which the material needed will be found. As a further aid, the main references are distinguished by heavy type.

The index to the British Standard is a model of clear layout: an indented column, with a new line for each sub-heading. Main headings start with a capital letter and sub-headings with a lower case one. Again important references are distinguished by heavy type and again there is an explanatory note.

Each of these indexes appeared to have the references it should, but of course the examination that members of the committee gave both before and during the meeting could not be as long as that of a regular user, and the full extent of the virtues (and vices) of indexes, like those of wives and husbands, are usually revealed only by a constant association and not by quick inspection, however experienced.

Richard Bancroft.

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