The Wheatley Medal for 1967 was awarded to Mr. Gilfred Norman Knight for the index to Churchill (Randolph S.) *Winston S. Churchill... volume 2, Young statesman, 1901-1919*, Heinemann, London, 1967.

Randolph Churchill's life of his father is a historical work conceived on a huge scale. It covers nearly a hundred years and in this period nearly every figure and every issue of any political importance in Great Britain is treated, often in considerable detail, because Churchill and his father were during their whole life so closely involved in the political life of the country.

As the volumes are coming out in succession with at least a year between each, it was rightly decided to provide an index for each volume. The index to volume 2 is on pages 723-775 and is thus about 7 per cent of the volume, not an unreasonable size for the index to such a work.

The index begins with a note on its scope and on the meaning of the abbreviations and conventions used in it. This is a model of such a note, short but clear and exhaustive.

The abbreviations are few enough to be quickly mastered. Probably the greatest saving of space is achieved by the use of the initials instead of the name of the six principal persons in the book, e.g. WSC for Winston Churchill, LG for Lloyd George and so on.

The conventions used include the following:

'Page reference numbers in **bold type** indicate that more than a few lines are devoted to the subject in the text'; more than one reference on a single page to any particular item is clearly shown in the index. Subheadings, we are informed, have been arranged mainly in chronological order and the method of alphabetical arrangement (i.e. of the main headings) is word-by-word. In the index itself the sub-headings are indented from the main headings but run on from one sub-heading to the next—an acceptable compromise between the clarity of
the fully indented, and the space-saving compression of the fully run-on, index.

Dates are given in brackets for many items: this is not only necessary because of the frequency of a chronological arrangement, but also often adds a precision to the entry which will save the user from looking up unwanted references, e.g. Crooks, Will, on WSC's platform (1908). On the other hand it is harder to justify the giving of dates for nearly all the persons in the index because these dates do not serve to distinguish persons of the same name who might otherwise be confused.

The arrangements are, on the whole, simple and in this sort of book complicated ones are not called for. The arrangement which required the greatest organization was that under Winston Churchill himself. The note at the beginning of the index explains the limitations on entries under that heading and under the heading itself there are for several types of material cross-references only, e.g.: Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer, Letters from and to: see under the names of recipients and senders.

Even so, there is more than a page of entries. However, they are so well divided into groups, e.g. 'Characteristics', or 'Finances', that there is no difficulty in finding what one wants.

All these are, of course, sound but well-known techniques, although it is seldom that one finds them so appropriately chosen and so conscientiously applied. But it is when the index is compared with the text, and the text with the index, that its real quality begins to be appreciated. Nothing that should be indexed seems to have been left out (and the index to such a work should be full) and the choice of wording for the entries gives the sense of the item referred to fairly and fully.

The most obvious characteristic of this index is consistent excellence and the more one uses the index the more this excellence becomes apparent.

The compiler is G. Norman Knight who has done more than anyone else to improve the standard of indexing in Great Britain and indeed elsewhere. Already in 1957 an experienced indexer, and of an age when many people contract their interests, he extended his by founding in that year the Society of Indexers and for the first ten years of its existence served first as its secretary and then as its chairman. He was tireless in promoting its objects—the improvement both of indexes and of the status of indexers. He was always ready to answer carefully and patiently the simplest as well as the most abstruse questions whether from fellow indexers or from publishers.

In founding the Society he drew together the isolated members of a solitary profession and gave them a collective consciousness and he made both the general public and publishers more aware of the importance of indexes and the need for good ones. He also founded The Indexer, the organ of the Society and the only journal devoted entirely to indexing, which has a world-wide circulation.

On his retirement from the chairmanship of the Society last year, he was unanimously elected a Vice-President and it is a further fitting reward for his work for indexing that this year an index of his should receive the honour of the Wheatley Medal.

Two other indexes were commended. The first was that to Mills (Peter) and Oliver (John), The survey of building sites in the City of London after the Great Fire of 1666, 5 volumes. (London Topographical Society, 1967, 62-64.) The index is contained in volume i. It is by Mr. P. E. Jones, and the citation specially mentioned his success in handling difficult material—difficult both to read, being manuscript facsimile, and to index, requiring a specialist knowledge of personal names and of London topography of the seventeenth century.

Here the index was compiled by another founder member of the Society of Indexers who is also a Freemason, Mr. A. R. Hewitt, and the index shows the advantages of such a combination of skill and subject knowledge.

Richard Bancroft.

The above is reprinted from the June issue of the Library Association Record by kind permission of the Editor.

Mr. E. V. Corbett, introducing Mr. Knight to the President of the Library Association, said:

It gives me the greatest pleasure, Mr. President, to ask you to present the Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index to Mr. Gilfred Norman Knight for his distinguished work in compiling the index to Winston S. Churchill, Vol. 2, written by Randolph S. Churchill and published by Messrs. Heinemann.

Mr. Knight has, during the last 20 years, done a great service to the world of books in making known, to authors and publishers alike, the necessity of providing any serious book with an adequate index. All we librarians here today know just how indispensable indexes are and the immense amount of time which they save—indeed the lack of an index or the lack of an efficient index often means that information which is actually recorded in a book cannot be traced.

It is, therefore, with a sense of personal pride and indebtedness that we pay honour today to Mr. Knight. Educated at Balliol College, where he graduated in the Honours School of Jurisprudence in 1913 and was awarded his M.A. in 1920, Mr. Knight was called to the Bar in 1918. Meanwhile, he was commissioned in the East Surrey Regiment in 1914 and then in 1918-19 served on the staff of the Judge Advocate General. There followed a number of posts at home and abroad, and then, from 1941-56, he served in the War Department.

Although Mr. Knight did a certain amount of freelance indexing from 1925 onwards, it was after 1956 that it became an all-consuming occupation. Since then he has indexed over 100 books and periodicals, including such well-known works as Gould's History of Freemasonry and Banister Fletcher's History of Architecture. In 1957 he founded the Society of Indexers and became its first Secretary, and has since served as Chairman and currently as Vice-President. In this Society he has rendered inestimable services to his chosen field.

Mr. President, most of us have at some time or other had to grapple in an amateur way with compiling an index. We have experienced the frustrations and the difficulties of trying to ensure uniformity and accuracy, the problems of choosing suitable headings and of making adequate cross-references, and the results have readily revealed our shortcomings and the inadequacies of our efforts. Nevertheless, this experience enables us to recognise in Mr. Knight's work the touch of the master and his undisputed claim to the highest honour the Library Association can offer. Only last year, Mr. Knight's work, submitted for the
Wheatley Medal, was ‘highly commended’, and it is therefore all the more gratifying that he has so quickly followed up this success by winning the medal outright this year.

After the presentation, Mr. Knight replied as follows:

Mr. President, Mr. Corbett, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To say that I was pleased when I heard that I was to receive this award would be a considerable understatement. I was positively thrilled and I reckon this conferment as about the happiest happening of my life, because I have always regarded the Wheatley Medal as the ‘blue riband’ of the indexing world, and to have been judged worthy of winning it crowns all my indexing ambitions.

I trust that it will not savour too much of egotism if I recall that it was on my suggestion that the medal was named after that great bibliographer, Dr. Henry Benjamin Wheatley, who was one of the founders of the Library Association in 1877 and has been described as ‘the father of modern indexing’. That suggestion was made in 1961 at a conference between officials of the Library Association, which had so generously agreed to institute the award, and the then Chairman and Secretary of the Society of Indexers, held to settle its terms and conditions.

But what, far beyond any personal gratification, makes me so delighted is that for the first time the medal has gone to someone who at the time was a member of the Society of Indexers. It is true that on at least four occasions members of the Society have been ‘highly commended’ and this very year Mr. A. R. Hewitt is proxime accessit for his fine index to Grand Lodge, 1717-1967. Mr. Hewitt was not only the Society’s first Chairman and is at present one of its Vice-Presidents, but is also a Fellow of your Association, Mr. President.

But as regards the medal itself, it will be recalled that the first two years of its existence drew blanks, no award being made either owing to a dearth of nominations or because no entry was judged to be of sufficiently high standard.

Then for three years in succession came a spate of author-indexers as the winners—a triumph of the amateur over the professional (not to be repeated, I fear, on the centre-court at Wimbledon this year). In this connexion it has been urged (possibly quite wrongly) that an author who compiles the index to his own book has an unfair advantage over his professional rival in that he is able to claim from his publisher almost unlimited space for his index.

Be that as it may, a break came in 1967 with the award going to Mrs. Alison Quinn for her magnificent index to the facsimile edition of Hakluyt’s Principall navigations. Mrs. Quinn has since, I am pleased to say, joined the Society of Indexers—which is always ready to recruit Wheatley Medal winners.

Only this morning I received from Mrs. Quinn a charming letter of congratulation, and I hope I shall not be accused of an unfitness of modesty if I venture to quote an extract:

I think that no other award of this medal could possibly give as much pleasure to Indexers or, indeed, has been so well deserved.

I have, of course, looked at both your Churchill indexes with pleasure and profit. Here is precept put into practice with elegance and precision, a classic example for indexers and even more for publishers. I see from The Spectator of May 3 that you have taught Mr. Randolph Churchill to be a judge of an index. He was reviewing Lady Cynthia Asquith: Diaries 1915-18 and made some astringent comments on the index.

[Here I feel I must state in parenthesis that so far from having been trained by me, Mr. Churchill has always been critical of bad indexes and has always insisted on good indexes for his own works, as evidenced by the index to his Lord Derby, King of Lancashire (1959). Mrs. Quinn continues:]

You also join the ranks of medal winner who is not an author/indexer. Is this the

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side of the angels or not? I rather think
it is.

With a certain feeling of nostalgia I recall
that for the first quarter of the present cen-
tury I resided in your county borough, Mr.
President. That was in the days of one of
your predecessors, that other great Croydon
Librarian, Stanley Jast, with whom I was
very friendly.

I shall always treasure this medal. For the
rest of my life it will remain a source of the
utmost pride.

CRITERIA FOR AWARDING
THE WHEATLEY MEDAL

'Criteria for the Award of the Wheatley
Medal' was the subject discussed at a joint
meeting of the Cataloguing and Indexing
Group of the Library Association and the
Society of Indexers held on Thursday,
March 4th, 1968, at the Library Association,
Ridgmount Street, London, W.I. Mr. Richard
Bancroft, Chairman of the Society of In-
dexers, was elected to the chair.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Bancroft said
that the representatives of the Society of
Indexers on the Wheatley sub-committee
had hammered out a list of criteria for evalu-
ating an index which had been submitted to
the Library Association Publications Com-
mittee and which he was to have presented
to the meeting. However, he had now been
elected chairman and naturally it would not
be proper for him to support or oppose any
particular views: he had to remain impartial.
Nevertheless he thought he might still tell
the meeting what these criteria were without
arguing in their favour in the hope that they
might stimulate clarifying discussion. The
criteria he gave were ten, each further de-
defined by the sort of question a judge would
ask in trying to apply each criterion:

Depth. Has the work been indexed as
thoroughly as it deserves? Is the index
complete and of sufficient size—not too
meagre to be useful nor unnecessarily
large? (Perhaps 5 per cent of the length
of text as a minimum?)

Reflection of author's intention. Does
the index contain the items the author
would have chosen and does their treat-
ment in the index preserve the proportions
of the book?

Nomenclature. Have suitable terms
been chosen to describe the concepts in the
text? Have the terms been chosen con-
sistently? Have appropriate cross-refer-
ces been made to relate out-of-date or
idiosyncratic terms used in the text to
those in current use?

Cross-references. Have sufficient and
suitable cross-references been made to con-
nect related items (concepts) usefully?

Accuracy. Do the references in the index
refer to the right page of the text? (The
index must be compared with the text.)
Do items in the text have references in the
index? (The text must be compared with
the index.) Where related entries, or en-
tries under different terms but for the same
concept, each include page references, are
these consistent? (The entries in the index
must be compared with each other.)

Filing Order. Is the index arranged in
correct alphabetical or other order? Are
personal and other proper names arranged
in accordance with the usual conventions?

Differentiation of references. Are page
references sufficiently distinguished by
subheadings to avoid long strings of num-
bers?

Clarity of layout. Does the layout help
to make the index easy to understand and
use?

Clarity of intention. If the index departs
from indexing conventions, have the de-
partures been clearly explained at the be-
inning of the index?

Contribution to indexing. Does this
index make an original contribution to the
art of indexing in any way?
Note that too much is as often bad as too little—a good index contains what is necessary; no less, no more.

Note also that indexes are intended to help the user to obtain information from the text, and the overriding criterion is how successful they are in doing this.

Mr. Peter Lewis opened for the Cataloguing and Indexing Group of the Library Association. The discussion, he said, might perhaps be taken as casting a critical eye on some previous awards of the medal, but he had no criticism of the indexes to which the medal had been awarded, whose standards had been of the highest. He would, however, ask the meeting to consider the difficult question of why the entries for the award had been so few in the previous year (1967), and what could be done towards stimulating interest, which was rather low.

The main difficulty, he continued, may lie in the conditions of the award as much as in the fact that there is no effective advertisement of its existence. This may be a reason why librarians had not taken an interest in it.

It was a question of approach. Indexes by librarians were a different thing from book indexes, and were concerned with information from whatever source, relating them to the context from which they came, a larger context of the world and knowledge generally. The book index tended to be related to the author's intentions, whereas the librarian's tended to relate back to information generally. Librarians were not compilers primarily, but extractors of information. Indexes they tended to make tended to be ineligible for the award of the Wheatley Medal. This was reinforced, suggested Mr. Lewis, by the librarians making indexes not as individuals but as part of a corporate effort, arising out of their corporate work. Work by corporate bodies might be among the most significant developments in indexing.

Some regarded it as beneficial to exclude scientific or highly technical works. But there might be a need to reconstitute the award body and its terms. He himself, although he might look to this as one of the few awards to which he could aspire, could not do so within its terms. He thought they might open up competition to indexers working as teams and in fields and subjects not at present eligible—widen the area, in other words, just as the Margaret Mann Citation for services to cataloguing in the U.S.A. was not necessarily awarded for the compilation of a catalogue. On this basis, the Wheatley Medal might even go to the firm or corporation which had made the most notable contribution to indexing during the year.

Mr. G. V. Speaight, a publisher member of the Society of Indexers, who described himself also as author and compiler of an index—to his own book—said he took five years to do the research on his book, and added ironically, with reference to the index, 'so why should anyone be able to pick it up and find in five minutes what it took me five years to do? Let them bloody well find it themselves.' 'We publishers,' he added, 'think sometimes indexes have been put in for their own sakes rather than to serve the book.'

Indexes should be comprehensive and consistent, systematic and selective, copy-perfect and easy to read, and need not be afraid to be amusing. In this respect, he quoted entries in Field-Marshal Lord Montgomery's History of the War: 'Abstemiousness in generals'; 'Haircuts, military.'

On how a publisher likes to see his index prepared, Mr. Speaight said that length was a problem. Very often an indexer was told to write 500 entries and did 1,500—but this was not always catastrophic. Then there was letter layout: the indexer should type his entries to the measure of the type. Another helpful thing, which indexers did not regard as their job, was to pick up all the inconsistencies in spelling, etc. He was in a better position than the proof-reader to do this, as the latter would need a fantastically marvellous memory for the mistakes.

Further, if the index were found to be too long, the indexer could previously have indicated possible cuts, perhaps less important
entries for omission if necessary at the last moment.

He supported the award of the Wheatley Medal, as a splendid idea, but was surprised that publishers were not asked by the two societies to nominate books. Good publishers were proud to see their books receive these recognitions; they were glad to see anything that would enhance and increase the prestige of good books.

Mr. T. Bell, for the Cataloguing and Indexing Group, one of the Library Association's representatives on the award committee, said that the absence was deplored of a great range of reference books and so on. He spoke mainly as a user of book indexes. On the criteria desirable in assessing the Wheatley Medal nominations, he said he was convinced that an index must meet the requirements of two categories of reader: (1) the one who had read the book and was already conversant with the terminology of the author, and (2) the other, primarily the librarian, interested in the type of approach that the document might contain. Their requirements should be met in the index by up-to-date terms, cross-references, etc. The criteria always placed too much reliance on reflecting the author's demands. The author's demands of an index were always more exhaustive than the reader's.

With reference to Mr. Bancroft's plea always for the page number, Mr. Bell suggested that they might, because of the hurry in which indexes were demanded, have to refer rather to paragraph numbers in the typed copy, and wait for the page numbers.

He spoke of the difficulty in assessing an index and questioned the validity of spot checks—the assessor should really read the book first! But he would opt out of this! Did one page-number mistake invalidate an index? Printers often moved type because of alterations after an index was done. The indexer had no control over layout, even where running it into paragraphs instead of separate lines made it look horrible.

Mr. G. Norman Knight asked why publishers were not included among the sponsors; they were as much involved as authors. He moved the following resolution:

'That in the opinion of this joint meeting, British publishers should be added to the members of the Library Association and Society of Indexers as potential sponsors of nominations for the Wheatley Award.'

Mr. F. H. G. Tatham seconded the resolution, and added that he thought the adjudication committee should be widened not only by publishers but also by authors.

Miss Sally Coole, answering Mr. Lewis's point about considering books indexed by committees rather than individuals, said that individual work could not fairly be compared, for such a purpose, with indexes done under the guidance of a committee, especially scientific, enormous works. There had been some thought of varying the award year by year, but it had been turned down by the Society of Indexers because they took the view that 'an index is an index is an index'. In reply to Mr. Speaight, she said it was really up to a publisher to indicate what he wanted an indexer to do. In general, the sub-committee tended to eliminate at the start any index only of names and places.

Mr. C. R. Raper said the Society of Indexers invited nominations of books from any source. He was for a motion which would encourage more names of potential indexers and perhaps provide more publicity for the award, but he moved an amendment, seconded by Mr. P. Lewis, that an approach be made to the Publishers' Association so that it should be represented on the Wheatley Medal Sub-committee. The amendment was, however, withdrawn when it was pointed out that not all publishers belonged to that organisation.

The original motion was put and carried.

Mr. Knight said he thought it admirable that collaborators in an index should receive an award, but that seemed a separate matter from an index. The Library Association should be asked to make a second, separate award for such indexers.

After further discussion by various members on the difficulty, pointed out by Mr.
Lewis, of the sub-committee not always having sufficient entries to choose from, the following resolution was proposed by Mr. K. G. B. Bakewell and seconded by Miss Moys:

'That every index published in Britain should be eligible for the Wheatley Medal.'

On being put to the vote, the resolution was carried by 16 votes to 4.

A vote of thanks to the Chairman and the speakers, Messrs. Lewis, Speaight and Bell, was warmly accorded, on the proposal of Mr. J. L. Downing.

J.M.S.

A NOTE ON SOME DIFFERENCES IN INDEXING

JUDY LANTZ

I had the good fortune to talk with indexers in Warsaw, Stockholm, Amsterdam, and London while on a tour of Europe during October and November of 1967. I have prepared indexes for medical books for a number of years, working in Carbondale, Illinois, U.S.A. My talks brought to light some good similarities and some interesting differences in techniques.

In Stockholm, for example, continuous cards are used frequently for index-making, 5in. x 3in. tan cards in a perforated strip, which eases the flow through the typewriter. They also have two largish holes punched in the lower part of the left side, and I was told that this was to facilitate their use by the printers, who could 'string' them up in correct order as they were set in type by hanging them on the 'copy' hook with which various typesetting machines are provided, or place them on a 'spike', from which they could be strung in proper order when reaching the proof-reader.

I have for some years used heavier, white 5in. x 3in. index cards, which come in strips of 1,000 to a box, manufactured in New York. I found them to be quite a boon. I do not mark the various items on page proofs for indexing but read and type the cards at the same time. Consequently, when I have finished going through the book all the cards are prepared. I know of a few other indexers in the U.S. who work this way. In my experience, working with an electric typewriter that, by pressing the 'Return' button, automatically rolls these continuous cards through to the desired typing position, is much more helpful than having to put each index card separately into the typewriter, and it saves a surprising amount of time. These white cards are heavier than the ones I saw in Stockholm, which makes them quite good to alphabet and to work with in general. However, the Swedish tan cards probably have the advantage of less expense for carriage or mailing purposes, especially in bulk.

In Amsterdam, Mr. Cornelissen, of the Excerpta Medica Foundation, was good enough to show me some rather impressive things that they are doing with indexing. When the copy for the indexes for the Excerpta Medica journals is prepared it is done on a Friden Flexowriter. This machine prepares a 1-inch tape called a Friden Business Systems—Tape-Talk. The tape is of paper and has small round holes punched in it. When editors at Excerpta Medica wish to prepare a cumulative, or combined, index from previous journal issues, the tapes (two or three or more) are fed into the Flexowriter. The person combining the indexes 're-alphabets' from indications printed or typed on regular paper, and pushing various buttons, one for each of the tapes, causes the machine to print out the new combined index.

A task of considerable magnitude is under way at Excerpta Medica, under the direction of Mr. Cornelissen. A sincere and patient attempt, by means of automatic equipment, is being made to organize the very considerable number of synonyms in medical indexing into a workable system. The number of entries in this undertaking will probably run into about 100,000, and the project will take about three years more to complete.