The Wheatley Medal for 1982

The Wheatley Medal Joint Selection Panel of the Library Association and the Society of Indexers met at the Library Association Headquarters on 24 May 1983 to consider nominations for the Wheatley Medal (for the best book index) of 1982. The panel of six, as usual, consisted of three representatives nominated by each of the two organizations. On this occasion SI's representatives were Mrs D. Blake, Mrs V. L. Chandler, and Mr L. M. Harrod, the LA being represented by Messrs R. M. Brunt, W. Dent, and M. Nail. Mr J. A. Gordon, Chairman of the Society of Indexers, convened the meeting and acted as Secretary. Mr Brunt, from Northern Ireland, was unable to attend the meeting and his comments were transmitted by letter.

This year there were only 8 nominations to be considered, compared with 20 in the previous year. The Panel, as ever, regretted the limited number of publications which had been brought to its attention, and once again pondered ways of encouraging publishers, indexers, and librarians to nominate outstanding indexes for the award.

The main features the Panel looks for in an index are its thoroughness, consistency, avoidance of 'strings' of undifferentiated page references, provision of 'see' and 'see also' references, physical presentation, and the provision of explanatory information if necessary. The Panel also takes into consideration the complexity of the undertaking and the extent to which the index represents an integral part of the work.

As in most years a number of the nominations were discounted quite quickly: whilst they were worthy and workmanlike examples of book indexes they could not be regarded as 'outstanding'. The remaining nominations were subjected to a most searching scrutiny but, in fact, most of the Panel were probably fairly certain from the outset of the identity of the winner. This was the index to The texts of King Lear and their origins. Vol. I. Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto by Peter W. M. Blayney, published by Cambridge University Press. The index, it was subsequently discovered, was the work of the author himself. It was a remarkable piece of work: immensely detailed and thorough, surmounting numerous technical difficulties, and constituting an intrinsic and most significant component of the work as a whole.

The Medal was presented by the Secretary-General of the Library Association at the opening ceremony of the Society of Indexers' conference at Bristol on Friday, 8 July 1983.

W. Dent,
Chairman of the Panel

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Simplifying Greek

Noting that the variety of accents and breathed accents introduced into Greek writing by Alexandrian philologists in the 1st century B.C. were no longer essential to the structure, pronunciation or style of the Greek language, and that much time was spent by schoolchildren in learning them, the Greek Ministry of Education introduced a monotonic accentuation system in April 1982. Cyprus followed suit in September of that year.

The general rules of the monotonic system are: (1) breathed accents are abolished, (2) only the acute accent is used, (3) words with two or more syllables take the acute accent, (4) no monosyllabic word takes an accent except one conjunction, two adverbs and the weak forms of the personal pronouns in order to avoid ambiguity between homographs. (Newsletter, Council of Europe. Documentation Centre for Education in Europe, 1/83, 7).