INDEXING AWARDS FOR 1983

The Wheatley Medal Joint Selection Panel of the Library Association and the Society of Indexers met at the British Library on 19 June 1984. Nominations for the Wheatley Medal were considered by three members of the Library Association (R. M. Brunt, W. Dent and M. Nail) and three members of the Society of Indexers (Valerie Chandler, Kate Suggate and Doreen Blake).

Tributes were paid to Leonard Montague Harrod, whose death had been announced earlier in the year. He had been a long-serving member of the Panel, chairing it several times, and his outstanding advice, expertise and encouragement were greatly missed.

This year there were more indexes to be considered, fourteen in all; an improvement which the Panel hoped would be maintained in future years.

Indexes worthy of Medals should be of outstanding quality. This means that the amount of time, care, originality of thought, and knowledge of the indexer should be clear from the final work, as well as consistency and accuracy. The Panel were surprised, yet again, at the number of mistakes found on the first casual test of works offered, and at the number of inconsistencies.

After much deliberation it was decided to award two medals, for the indexes of the following publications:

The laws of Trinidad and Tobago: revised edition (in seventeen volumes). Index compiled by A. R. Hewitt (Published by Government of Trinidad and Tobago, 1981).


A. R. Hewitt is a Fellow of the Library Association, and was a founder member, first Chairman and later a Vice-President of the Society of Indexers. Assistant Librarian, Honorary Society of the Middle Temple from 1925 to 1949, with a break for war service in the RAF, he then became Secretary and Librarian, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London, 1950 to 1959 and Librarian and Curator of Museum, Freemasons Hall, 1960 to 1972. Mr Hewitt has indexed law books since 1936, including many titles in either Halsbury's Laws of England or Halsbury's Statutes, as
Robert Latham was born in Audley, Staffordshire. Educated at Cambridge, he was Reader in History in the University of London at Royal Holloway College from 1947 to 1968 when he went to the University of Toronto as Professor of History. Since 1970 he has been a Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge, where, as Pepys Librarian until 1982, he has had charge of the remarkable collection of books, prints and manuscripts—including the manuscript of the Diary itself—which Pepys left to his old college. He has devoted the greater part of the past thirty years to the study of the Diary, and in addition to his work on the eleven volume edition, is editor of The illustrated Pepys. In 1973 he was awarded the CBE, and in 1982 was elected a Fellow of the British Academy.

The Medals were announced and presented by the President of the Library Association, Ronald Surridge, on 31 October 1984 at a reception at the Headquarters of the Library Association. It was a peculiarly gratifying occasion for members of the Society of Indexers. We were delighted to see the Wheatley Medals awarded both to so distinguished a founder-member and active former officer of our society, and to the compiler of an index which has been so often featured in this journal. Further, indexes featured large among the other Library Association awards presented on the same occasion.

The Besterman Medal, for an outstanding bibliographic or guide to the literature, was given to two winners, one being for London illustrated, 1604–1851: a survey and index to topographical books and their plates by Bernard Adams (Library Association). This lists more than 8,250 plates in 230 books and print sets published between 1604 and 1851. London illustrated enables the user to identify the original book source of an undated and/or untitled plate, to date accurately a detached plate by referral to the publication in which it was originally bound, and to trace illustrations of particular sites or buildings and date them precisely. By providing a detailed catalogue of the optimum number of separate plates with which each work was originally published, it enables would-be owners to check the completeness of bound volumes offered for sale.

Bernard Adams is a Fellow of The Library Association and an MBE. He was Librarian of the British Council Library from 1946 to 1976, and before then worked at the Cambridge University Library.

Among the volumes highly commended for the McColvin Medal, given for an outstanding reference book, was The Times index, January–December 1788 prepared by Richard Freebury; edited by Reg Readings (Research Publications). This index is 291 pages in length and has more than 75,000 entries. Each entry concludes with the date, page and column reference to The Times. It provides a unique insight into events in 1788. This volume completes the index for the entire history of The Times from 1785 to the present day.

Richard Freebury has worked for Research Publications since 1975 and has been responsible for the production of other indexes to The Times. He is currently indexing material on African and Middle-East affairs. Reg Readings has been with Research Publications since 1976 and is Editor of the indexes to The Times. He is at present indexing the Jewish chronicle and the Middle East economic digest.

For such awards in the UK, this was indeed the Year of the Indexer.

* * *

In the United States, at the ASI Annual Meeting on 19 May 1984 in Washington, the 1983 H.W. Wilson Indexing Award was presented to Mary Fields, Senior Lexicographer, and the Indexing Staff of Information Handling Services, Englewood, Colorado, for their work on Index and directory of the US Industry Standards. Trish Yancey, Senior Manager, Index Development accepted the award and gave this description of their project:

'The Index and directory provides access to 20,000 standards from the 38 largest standards-generating bodies. The first volume is the Subject Index and the second includes a Numeric Index, ANSI Number Concordance, and Society Directory.

'The indexing staff consisted of two full-time lexicographers who, with indexing support staff, completed the index in approximately 18 months. Consultants were used to assist the staff in highly specific technical areas. Virtually every aspect of technology is represented in standards, and no existing thesaurus was found that could adequately cover all topics included. Therefore, the first step was to build a controlled vocabulary. BRS Search was used to determine what subjects were covered in enough standards to warrant research and subsequent inclusion in the thesaurus.

'Various technical reference tools, such as the British Standards Institution's ROOT Thesaurus, the Thesaurus of Engineering and Scientific Terms, technical dictionaries, and glossaries from standards societies were consulted.

'The system used to create this index is somewhat the opposite of a traditional system. Document numbers are listed on a screen and duplicated, then moved from that screen to subject terms. This approach avoids many problems that commonly accompany traditional index-
ing, such as variant spellings. It also eliminates the inconvenience of waiting until the index is sorted to see how its growth affects the usefulness of particular entries. The thesaurus automatically posts cross-references under a term in order to cut keying time and errors. System reports allow for selection by individual terms and provide a numeric listing showing all standards with all terms assigned.

'Perhaps the most innovative aspect of the system is the dual function of BRS Search, which was used not only to identify similar indexable concepts, but also for data entry. When a search strategy is formulated, it is saved and given an identification number which is then linked to the subject heading and a batch run automatically moves those standards from the document number screen to the selected subject term.'

* * *

We offer our congratulations to all these indexers who bring so much prestige to our profession.

Doreen Blake
Chairman of the Joint Selection Panel of the Library Association and the Society of Indexers

---

Obituary

Theodosia Cecil Robertson
1921–1984

Secretary of the Society of Indexers (1979–84)

Rarely, this journal has the opportunity to celebrate the life of one who, while not a practising indexer, yet served the cause of indexing with distinction.

Cecil Spring-Rice was the daughter of Margery Spring-Rice, author of Working-class wives (reprinted by Virago, 1981, with an enlightening Foreword and Notes by her daughter); and a great-niece of Dame Millicent Fawcett and of Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson. After obtaining a degree in mathematics at Girton College, Cambridge, she married Martin Robertson, later Lincoln Professor of Classical Archaeology and Art at the University of Oxford. They had two daughters and four sons; there are now twelve grandchildren. As her family grew up, Cecil embarked on a career in teaching, becoming in time Acting Head of one school, Academic Registrar of a non-university college in Oxford, and Head of a small boarding school in Norwich.

After leaving the teaching profession, she agreed in 1979 to become the SI's Honorary Secretary. For the next five years, her remarkable capacity for hard work and her farseeing grasp of detail were placed at the service of indexing, and above all of indexers. Administration was handled with a combination of grace, pragmatic intelligence, and fearsome efficiency. She was the instigator of the publication Indexers available, now approaching its fourth issue; to this, as to her editorship of the Newsletter, her servicing of meetings, a huge correspondence, she contributed not only her creativity and wide experience, but a zeal for communication and for caring human relationships.

She was a lover of life, and of music, books and gardens. She died after a fall, sustained while working in her own garden. To her family we can readily extend our sympathy, for, truly in the tradition of G. Norman Knight who founded the SI, she made all indexers feel part of a single devoted family.

Adapted by Judy Batchelor from a fuller tribute by John Gordon circulated earlier to members of SI.