A WARDS FOR INDEXERS

Australian Society of Indexers’ Medal

Two indexes were declared joint winners of the AusSI Medal for 1992. Medals were awarded to Max McMaster’s index to Infectious disease in pregnancy and the newborn infant (published by Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991) and to Margery Price’s index to The law handbook 1992 (published by the Fitzroy Legal Service, 1992).

The judges commented of the first index, ‘The standard is uniformly high throughout. It impresses as a thoroughly competent work’. Of the second, they said, ‘Margery Price’s index to The law handbook 1992 is especially noteworthy for the complementary role it plays to other parts of the book. It is carefully designed to work with the general contents page, the detailed contents page at the beginning of each chapter and the glossary to form a whole greater than the sum of its parts’.

They also Highly Commended Josephine Cardale’s index to Insects of Australia, published by University of Melbourne Press in 1991, as ‘a successful and impressive attempt to index the definitive work on the subject, one which by its nature posed many challenges to the indexer: a valiant effort, and heroic’. While this index was unquestionably of very high standard, by comparison with the two winners it displayed some difficulties which could not be overlooked. For example, there were blocks of undifferentiated page numbers and other signs that the publisher had imposed space constraints on the index.

The Wheatley Medal 1991

The Library Association’s annual awards, including the Wheatley Medal, were presented at a dinner at Congress House, London on 6 October 1992.

Olwen Terris, Chairman of the Wheatley Panel, said: ‘This year the judging panel had the pleasure of assessing several excellent indexes. Some of these indexes were to works which, it might be argued, presented fewer intellectual challenges to the indexer. Yet these smaller indexes, sympathetic to the scale and structure of the work, which take great care with organization, which guide you quietly and without fuss to the required information, should not be forgotten. The steady, highly professional work of those indexers who did not receive a medal or commendation this year should be acknowledged on occasions such as these.

‘The Wheatley Medal is awarded for an outstanding index. In practice this means that the size of the work, the complexity of the language, and the organization of hierarchies through what might be a text with delicate and fine inter-relationships between concepts, must give the indexer scope to employ the full range of his or her skills; they are asked, if you like, to perform upon a larger stage.

‘The Wheatley Medal is awarded this year for just such an index. The British tax encyclopaedia, indexed by Elizabeth Moys and published by Sweet and Maxwell, provides a wholly reliable guide to a work whose internal structure is extremely complicated. But the thinking behind this index is as clear as its typographical design. The index demanded precision and infinite care with location numbers and a confident and commanding use of cross-references and sub-headings to guide the lawyer and economist swiftly to the precise piece of information that they needed to know.

These demands were excellently met by Elizabeth Moys.’

The British tax encyclopaedia consists of 8000 pages in seven looseleaf binders, with a further six looseleaf supplements produced each year. As the pagination thus keeps changing, with text constantly being added or withdrawn, the index refers to paragraph numbers. These can be quite complicated: e.g., 3-006/13, 3-172A, 3A-299, as they appear chronologically in a single binder. Main headings are in boldface; levels beyond them may go to four. The preliminary note explaining the 80-page, double-column index takes more than a page. To keep the size from becoming too great, abbreviations were used wherever
Elizabeth Moys recently retired from a distinguished career as librarian in the UK and Africa. She is the creator of the now classic Moys classification and thesaurus for legal materials, first published (by Butterworths) in 1968; the third edition, overseen as usual by its compiler, appeared in September 1992. She has also written, edited or indexed many publications, especially in the field of law librarianship. She is currently President of the British and Irish Association of Law Librarians, and Treasurer of the Society of Indexers. The October 1992 issue of The Indexer included her authoritative article, 'Legal vocabulary and the indexer'.

She worked on this index at home on her own computer, using MACREX, taking seven months overall. After compiling the rough index for two-thirds of the first volume (about 1000 pages), she wrote a paper to the publishers setting out various questions and proposals. A meeting was held with inhouse editors and lawyer-editors to discuss these matters, and agreement reached. Her current activities include indexing the two-monthly supplements to the same work, removing superseded entries as well as cumulating entries. 'It rules my life', she claims; 'I keep thinking of Benjamin Franklin’s dictum, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain except death and taxes”.'

Sweet & Maxwell selected her for the work because of her known good work. She felt that she started this mammoth enterprise ‘with an enormous advantage’, knowing both the subject and the publishers.

As a specimen extract from this index, we reproduce below the first third of the entry for GIFTS.

Gifts, abatement. See Abatement of gifts.
agricultural property, CGT, 3-203A
IHT, 3-5037ff
allocation of exemptions, IHT, 3-5035ff
assets from trusts, roll-over relief, 3-063
business promotions, 6-1388
business property, foreign-controlled companies, CGT, 3-153A/2
hold-over relief, CGT, 3-203A, 3-206
migration of trustees, 3-227
non-residents, CGT, 3-153A/1
roll-over relief, CGT 3-153Aff, 3-203A
valuation, IHT, 3-5037ff
CGT, 3-003, 6-1935
examples, 7-6050ff
instalment payment of tax 3.008Aff, 3-206
chargeable to IHT, CGT 1-183A/1ff, 3-206
charitable. See Gifts, recipients, charities; Payroll deductions schemes.

A Highly Commended certificate was awarded to A companion to ethics, edited by Peter Singer, indexed by Meg Davies and published by Blackwell.

Olwen Terris described this work as ‘a collection of essays on a number of philosophical and moral issues. The language used to argue the hypotheses is dense and conceptual. Meg Davies has demonstrated an ability to extract from the text the essence of the argument and to present an account to the reader in a deceptively simple arrangement whose intellectual insights provide a stimulating and highly informative index. I particularly enjoyed such discriminating entries as “bad, see also evil, sin and wrong”, and pondered long on these fine distinctions. We liked this index very much.’

Meg Davies works full-time as a freelance indexer (and copyeditor and proofreader), compiling some 60 indexes a year at home. She holds degrees in theology, and has done much previous work for Blackwells.
In compiling this index she had some outline guidance from the editor, who wanted the index to be very comprehensive and ‘bear the burden of making the volume usable as a work of reference’. He indicated some significant concepts on the proofs, but she took the decisions as to how to organize the material, to make the contents of a highly abstract, thematic book accessible to the reader. Rationalist and positivist ethics, for example, had to be distinguished, and many cross-references were needed for themes treated in different schools of philosophy.

_A companion to ethics_ has 545 pages, with a triple-column index of 19 pages. The work took nearly eighty hours through one month. Below we reproduce a sample entry:

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choice, moral 399, 407, 418
capacity for 310, 344
in Christian ethics 94
and deontology 209-10, 213, 216
and egoism 201-3
and existentialism 537
in Greek ethics 128
ideal 244
and intuitionism 413
in Islam 107, 112
in Marxism 154
and moral character 257, 344
and options 232-5, 237-9
and predestination 112, 534-5
and prima facie duties 223-6
and rights 264, 265
and utilitarianism 244
and virtue theory 252, 257
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Other volumes receiving Library Association Awards on this occasion had reference made to their indexes.

The Besterman Medal for an outstanding bibliography or guide to the literature was awarded to Katharine Pantzer for _A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland and of English books printed abroad, 1475-1640... volume 3_ (The Bibliographical Society/Oxford University Press, 1991). She was quoted as saying ‘My purpose in this volume was to make the various indexes as accurate and helpful as I could and to put them in a format that would be easy to comprehend and yet congruent with the layout of volumes 1 and 2’.

_The Oxford companion to popular music_ by Peter Gammond (Oxford UP, 1991). Highly Commended by the McCollvin Panel which considers outstanding reference books, ‘included very useful indexes’, while they commended _The Times atlas of world exploration_ by Felipe Fernandez-Armesto (Times Books, 1991), which would have received a higher rating had it not lacked a bibliography.

A new award was presented for the first time on this occasion. Professor James Douglas Pearson, MA HonFLA, became the first recipient of the Walford Award, instituted by the Grants and Awards Sub-committee of The Library Association to recognize continual and sustained work in the field of bibliography.

‘Continual and sustained’ well describes the work of Professor Pearson, who was Librarian of the School of Oriental and African Studies from 1950 to 1972, building up the library to make it one of the best working libraries for Oriental scholarship in the world.

His published contributions to the bibliography of African and Asian materials date back to 1952. He is best known for founding and compiling _Index Islamicus_ 1906-1955 (Mansell, 1958), and its continuing supplements, and _The Quarterly Index Islamicus_ (Mansell, 1977-) bibliographical journal, which he compiled and edited up to his retirement in 1979. In 1980 he was awarded The Library Association Besterman Medal for _South Asian bibliography_ (Harvester Press 1979). His latest work will be the revised and extended edition of _Guide to documents and manuscripts in the British Isles relating to Africa_ (Mansell, in press).

Professor Pearson founded the course in Asian and African bibliography at the School of Librarianship and Archives, University College, London and has trained many librarians and bibliographers. He was for many years a member of the Society of Indexers.

The Society of Authors’ Medical Writers Group annually awards the Glaxo Prize for Medical Writing and Illustration. We are pleased to note the criteria adopted for judging the entries in 1992: ‘originality and quality of presentation, scholarship, a clear and lucid prose style, relevance, quality and clarity of illustration, _standard of indexing_’ (our italics).
In the US, the Wilson/ASI Award was presented to Rachel Jo Johnson for her index to *American law of real property*. This volume was published by Matthew Bender, a New York-based legal and tax publisher that has produced analyses of the latest developments in the law for more than a hundred years. Jo Johnson has worked in-house in Bender’s editorial department and indexed their publications, being trained by Bender after graduating in English. The *American Society of Indexers’ newsletter* (No. 110, May/June 1992) comments:

Indexing legal material creates the need for a specialized approach. Entries are so specific that it is rare to make more than one citation per entry. The challenge is to decentralize subject matter that is highly centralized in its organization and writing. The feeling on completing a Bender index could be compared to the construction of an elaborate piece of architecture with all the pieces intricately interlocked.

*How odd that the AusSI, Wheatley and Wilson Awards this year should all alike have been presented to women indexers for their work on vast cumulations of constantly updated legal papers!* 

**Silver medal for abstracts service**

A rare recognition for an abstracting and indexing service came when the Swedish Royal Academy (Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien) awarded its 1990 antiquarian medal in silver to Mette Iversen and Ulf Nilsson, the first editors of *Nordic Archaeological Abstracts*. The award is reported in the editorial of the issue of NAA which appeared in 1992. The investiture was made by the King of Sweden in recognition of their long-standing efforts and achievements in the field of archaeological bibliography. *NAA*, which first appeared in 1974, modelled itself quite closely on *British Archaeological Abstracts*, though obviously some changes to the classification had to be made to fit the Nordic situation. The publication is produced entirely in English, from abstracts supplied (mostly) by the original authors. Material comes from all four Nordic countries, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland. Careful attention has always been paid to the indexing, which must always be the core of an abstracting service. The editors have always been careful to explain whenever they have had, over the years, to make changes to the index structure. Latterly they have been working towards a fully computerized publication, experiencing what sounds like the usual delays and frustrations in the process. We salute their achievement.

**ISO 999: a long-running saga**

A document circulated recently stated that international standardization is:

(a) voluntary;
(b) done for noble reasons—such as serving industrial or social interests—and therefore deemed to be a *good thing*

A (c) could usefully be added: the wheels of international standardization grind exceedingly slowly.

My article in *The Indexer* 17 (2) October 1990 concluded with favourable references to Susan Klement and Hans Wellisch and the following statement:

Susan Klement has also volunteered to prepare the index to the revised ISO 999, *if it is ever published*, so that we are assured of an index which should reach the same high standard as the index to the revised BS 3700.

Until then, events had been as follows:

19 October 1984: a small group met at a meeting of the British Standards Institution and agreed in principle to revise ISO 999.

Various drafts were produced at intervals until 1988. The UK voted against the 1988 draft for various reasons, most notably that it bore little relationship to earlier drafts.

*May 1989:* a proposal by Susan Klement (Canada), supported by Hans Wellisch (USA) and John Farrell (UK), was accepted unanimously at a meeting in Washington. Drusilla Calvert transmitted this news by telephone to Hilary at the ASI 21st anniversary meeting in San Francisco, and it was greeted with acclamation when I included it in my address.

Alas, we were not yet there. More drafts appeared containing things which the BSI Committee were not happy about, and we decided to take the bull by the horns: we offered in 1991 to assume responsibility for producing a new draft which Janet Shuter agreed to edit. This proposal was accepted at a meeting in Copenhagen and Janet did sterling work on the draft. It was further considered at a meeting in London in May 1992 and, in spite of minor objections by Canada, France and the United States, it does seem now that we are nearly there.

KEN BAKEWELL
(at SI conference, 19 July 1992)

**Manual searching**

Computer manuals are essential, reported most computer users responding to a recent fax poll. 90% use the manual to get computer products up and running, 87% for troubleshooting—especially those who can’t telephone the manufacturer’s help line—and 54% for tutorials. ‘A responsible and competent manufacturer/publisher should see to it that documentation is complete, accurate and thoroughly indexed’, says *PC/Computing*, April 1992 [our italics]. If only, *if only* they would!

M.C.