
AWARDS

Australian Society of Indexers' Medal

Full details of the 1993 AusSI Award were not available for our last report. The *AusSI Newsletter* 18 (1) 1994 reports, 'the Panel of Judges comprised George Levick, John Curtin (Department of Communication Studies) and Jean Conochie. They found that of the many entries three finalists stood out. The winner was clearly Max McMaster for the index to *Chemistry and biology of (1-3)-beta-glucans*, by Bruce Stone and CSIRO Chairman, Adrienne Clarke, published by La Trobe University Press in 1992, 'a work of outstanding technical difficulty. This index showed all the virtues of a good index, with clear typography and differentiation of tables and figures'.

The two runners-up were Elmer Zalums, for his index to *Cambridge history of Southeast Asia* (2 vols.) published by Cambridge University Press in 1992; and Michael Cathcart, for his to *Manning Clark's History of Australia*, abridged by himself, published by Melbourne University Press in 1993. Both these indexes were 'commended' by the judges.

In his Judges' Report, George Levick observed: 'Represented in the candidates for this year's award were indexes to monographs and to volumes of serials; practical handbooks and scholarly works; personal journals, histories and technical treatises.

'When faced with such diversity, it is ultimately impossible to formulate rigid criteria so that marks can be allocated mechanically and a winner determined arithmetically. The final choice, once the hurdle of outstanding professional competence has been crossed, has to be based on relatively subjective judgements in matters such as the magnitude of the challenge presented by the subject texts, the extent to which the indexer's opportunity to exert an individual style has been used to assist (rather than to impress) the user, and the potential of the index to contribute to the development of the profession in Australia.

'Each of the indexes to historical works was an exemplar of how such texts should be served. Elmar Zalums perhaps deserved some extra credit because of the extra challenge in dealing with an edited compilation.

'However, the index to the technical monograph compelled our special consideration. The text ranges over physical and organic chemistry, biochemistry and physiology, and presents a wealth of material in figures and tables containing all kinds of technical data. No more of this complexity than is absolutely unavoidable has been allowed to run over into the index, which is plain and straightforward, while showing all the virtues of a good index. It uses cross-references with discretion and economy. Its handling

of technical terms and biological nomenclature is unflinching competent. It is well served with a clear typography, and its differentiated references to tables and diagrams are accurate and supported by an explanatory introduction.'

The judges for the AusSI 1994 award were Max McMaster, John Curtin and Ross Harvey. From 25 indexes submitted for consideration a shortlist of six was selected. The judges assessed these using six criteria: was the index comprehensive?; did it differentiate sufficiently (depth of indexing)?; were cross-references appropriate and effective?; was the index well presented on the page?; did the index work? did the index enhance the book further than any competent index would do?

The judging produced one clear winner and five commended indexes all of high standard.

The winner was Barry L. Howarth's index to *Portrait of the family within the total economy*, by G. D. Snooks (Cambridge University Press, 1994). Ross Harvey explained that the judges felt that this technically competent index added an additional perspective to the book by enhancing the reader's knowledge of the book's structure and content. One judge commented that it was a 'humane' index. Features they particularly liked included its clearly typography, its comprehensive *see* and *see also* references, its comprehensive nature, the inclusion of glossary terms in the index and its use of entries such as 'Sontag, S.: on photography' and 'Schumpeter, Joseph: on economic growth' which alert the user to the precise context of the term.

There were other characteristics which the judges liked less: subheadings were not always in consistent alphabetical order, punctuation was not always consistent, and the use of *passim* (although this may have been prescribed by the publisher's house style). However, these characteristics did not detract significantly from a helpful and intelligent index.

The runners-up were:

Patricia Holt's index to *A history of Hawthorn* by V. Peel, D. Zion and J. Yule (Melbourne University Press, 1993).

We considered that this otherwise admirable index was flawed by insufficient references and the lack of entries for some names, e.g. in the photographs.

Kingsley Siebel's index to *The laws of Australia, 5: Civil Procedure* (Law Book Co., 1994).

While we recognized this index's specialized audience, we considered that it did not use a sufficiently wide range of key-words, thus restricting the access it

provided to the book. There were typographical inconsistencies, such as *see* references being right justified whereas *see also* references were not, and we noted that some terms which we expected to be present were not.

Geraldine Suter's index to *Australian criminal justice* by M. Findlay, S. Odgers and S. Yeo (Oxford University Press, 1994).

We felt that the indexer was perhaps working under constraints imposed by the publisher which resulted in blemishes; for instance, presentation was not helped by poor turnovers. We also noted some inconsistencies between thorough indexing in some cases and no index entries for other terms we expected.

Alan Walker's index to *Blackstone's Guide to Australian Legal Books 1986-1990* (Blackstone Press, 1993).

While we were sympathetic with the difficulties which the indexer encountered in compiling this index (the book is a collection of title-pages and contents

pages) we felt that this index could have been more comprehensive and that it did not allow for the possibility of use by the general user, catering rather for the legal user in its choice of terms.

Indexes to *ASC Digest* by A. Walker, C. Skourletos *et al.* (Australian Securities Commission, 1994).

This entry was in fact three indexes to a periodical, two of which were relatively straightforward and presented no special challenges. Although all three indexes achieved their stated aims well and were impressively extensive and industrious, they did not demonstrate the qualities which raised them from the level of competent to that of inspired.

This entry posed some problems for the judges. We encountered some difficulty when considering how to assess indexes of a 'mechanical' kind against those book indexes which provide greater scope for critical discrimination.

Society of Indexers/Library Association awards

Wheatley Medal

The UK Library Association's annual awards for 1994, including the Wheatley Medal awarded jointly with the Society of Indexers, were presented at a dinner at the Barbican Centre, London.

The Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index was presented to Janine Ross for her index to the *Encyclopedia of food science, food technology and nutrition* by R. McCrae *et al.*, published in 1993 by Academic Press. This is a work of eight volumes, the last comprising just the index and list of contributors, priced at about £1100 for the set. The text totals 5,500 pages; the index, in three columns, covers 364 pages and has over 50,000 entries.

Presenting the Medal, Olwen Terris, Chairman of the Wheatley Panel, said: 'The Panel this year was presented with a selection of indexes of a uniformly high standard. This index is a most impressive work in which the indexer has had to assimilate issues as diverse as microbiology, anorexia, factory construction and the manufacture of potato crisps. The wide-ranging text has been carefully read, absorbed, indexed and presented in a thoroughly professional manner, taking account of the levels of understanding of the diverse users of the book.'

Janine Ross holds degrees in immunology and microbiology, and became a university lecturer, then a medical researcher, in these areas. A full-time indexer for the last seventeen years in the medical and paramedical fields, she is also involved in the indexing of data and the preparation of indexing software for CD-ROMs, acting as a consultant to several publishers in



Ian Crane, Chairman of SI, with Jan Ross, winner of the Wheatley Medal.

this field. This is the longest index she has done: the entry for milk, for example, covered eight columns, while the terminology for the same concepts varied widely, causing an exceptionally high number of cross-references, as many as five or six per entry. It took her about six months, spending around 500 hours on it.

A special award was made by the Wheatley Panel to Ann Hudson for her index to *The Bedford inventories: the worldly goods of John, Duke of Bedford*, compiled by Jenny Stratford, published by the Society of



Ann Hudson.

Antiquaries of London, and produced by the printers of *The Indexer*, Stephen Austin & Sons. Ann received a cheque from the Society of Indexers' G. Norman Knight Fund. Olwen Terris commented on this award: 'It is an astonishingly assured index to a most detailed and scholarly text. This work is of exceptional importance to historians and art scholars of later medieval England and France, and the index confidently embraces art, social and economic history. It is meticulous and painstakingly researched, and an intelligent and imaginative use of typography aids the user to locate unerringly the most detailed piece of information.'

Ann Hudson is a graduate in archaeology and art history who worked in publishing and teaching before becoming a freelance indexer in 1982. She specializes in indexing journals for learned societies in the fields of history and archaeology. In 1990 she received a commendation from the Wheatley Panel for her index to the *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, volumes 101-25.

The Bedford Inventories is basically a collection of lists made at various times of the possessions of John of Lancaster, Duke of Bedford (1389-1435). The text is multilingual, including passages in Latin and Norman French. The same objects often occur in more than one list, with varying descriptions. The printed index covered some 30 pages—'tightly packed'—of a book of nearly 500 pages. It took about six months to complete, with proofs arriving in batches.

The Library Association's **Besterman Medal**, awarded annually for an outstanding bibliography or guide to the literature, includes 'the quality of the indexing' in its criteria. This medal went to *Africa: a guide to reference material* by John McIlwaine (Hans Zell, 1993): 'one of the most finely disciplined works we have examined'.

The short list for the LA's **McColvin Medal** for an outstanding reference work included *Measles: an historical geography* by A. Cliff, P. Hagggett and M. Smallman-Raynor (Blackwell, 1993), of which the judges observed, 'the bibliography and index stood up admirably to our sustained assault on its accuracy and coverage'.

Carey Award

The Society of Indexers' seventh Carey Award for 'outstanding services to indexing' was presented to Barbara Britton, SI Treasurer from 1980-92, Chief Marker of the SI Training course and 'Proofreader extraordinary', 'for selfless dedication to the Society and its Council', describing her as 'loyal, considerate and indefatigable; ever ready to respond to emergencies; learned, trustworthy and compassionate; a rock in time of trouble; confidante and supporter of countless members'.

C. M. S

Wilson Award

The Wilson Award winner for 1994 is Patricia Deminna of California. Her award-winning indexes are found in *Carnal Israel: reading sex in Talmudic culture*, by Daniel Boyarin, published by the University of California Press.

Patricia came to indexing from a background in newspaper production, and completed the United States Department of Agriculture Basic Indexing course.

Despite the difficulty of the *Carnal Israel* subject matter, she found the index not difficult to create because the book was so well written. The author's words made the salient concepts easy to pick out and relate to other concepts. Patricia does not have a background in Judaic studies but found her Catholic edu-

cation useful in understanding the theological concepts.

Alexandra Nickerson, Chair of the Wilson Award Committee, observed, 'This year's 31 submissions for the 1994 Award were of generally very high quality and covered a variety of fields including several books each in medicine, Judaic studies, and law, *Carnal Israel's* indexes (a subject index and an index of scripture) stood out from the others due to their selectivity and sensitivity of terms, accuracy, consistency, readability, and clear handling of a complex topic. Patricia's ability to choose elegant phrases to sum up complex subjects truly represents the art of indexing.'

The Wilson Award Committee members for 1994 were Linda Fetters, Frances Lennie, Jane Maddocks, Suzanna Moody, and Alexandra Nickerson.