

## Award for Indexing Excellence

### 2008 Wheatley Medal

At the annual dinner on Saturday 12 July during the Society of Indexers conference at Winchester University, SI President Professor John Sutherland presented the Wheatley Medal for an outstanding index to Barbara Hird for her index to *The Oxford history of literary translation in English, vol. 1: To 1550*, edited by Roger Ellis (OUP, 2008).

The panel of judges were pleased with both the quality and variety of indexes submitted for the award this year but agreed that Barbara Hird was a very worthy winner of the medal. *The Oxford history of literary translation in English* was felt to be the sort of collection that requires a good index to maximize the book's value. 'This requirement is certainly met here,' said the chair of the judges, Professor Peter Willett of Sheffield University's Department of Information Studies. 'One immediately notices the very clear layout, with an excellent use of variant typefaces and of indentation. More detailed inspection reveals the judicious selection of terms that has been made, the excellent cross-referencing structure, and more specialist attributes such as the handling of multiple translations of the same text.'

Philip Hillyer was highly commended for his index to Bill Bell's *The Edinburgh history of the book in Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 2007). 'This was another excellent index,' said Professor Willett. 'Strong on concepts, well presented and handling in an elegant way the many corporate authors that characterize the subject.'

Finally, Liza Furnival was commended for her index to the World Health Organization's *Quality assurance of pharmaceuticals* (2nd updated English edition, 2007). This was another good index, the panel noting in particular the consistent handling of acronyms (an important factor in many technical indexes) and the strong concept structure that was adopted.

### **Biographical information on the winners**

**Barbara Hird** has been a Registered Indexer, and subsequently a Fellow of the Society of Indexers, since 1985, specializing in the history and culture of the ancient world, late antiquity and the middle ages, including the early Islamic world. She was previously awarded the Wheatley Medal for 1999 for the *Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature*; she has indexed the majority of the volumes of the new *Cambridge Ancient History* and was shortlisted for the Wheatley Medal in 1994 for Volume 5. She read Classics at Cambridge and held a graduate fellowship at the University of Athens, where she developed her interest in the Byzantine period; after a short career in the Civil Service, followed by some years at home with small children, she trained as an indexer, and has been surrounded by piles of proofs ever since. She is a past Vice-President of the Society of Indexers and has chaired its Training and Qualifications Board. Her main leisure interests are embroidery and travel.

**Philip Hillyer** studied theology at Aberystwyth and Edinburgh and lectured at Bishop's College, Calcutta between 1979 and 1984. His PhD thesis eventually (1990) became a spiritual biography of Charles de Foucauld, the French mystic who was beatified in 2005. Following his return to Edinburgh, Philip gradually moved from freelance research and writing to editing and indexing, joining the Society of Indexers and the SfEP about 20 years ago. Some indexing projects – such as three theological dictionaries and three volumes (so far) of a History of Evangelicalism for Inter-Varsity Press – have arisen out of his academic interests. Others – such as books on Islamic art, Scottish education or media studies – have arisen from other interests, publishing crises, or pure chance; and then led to further commissions. Philip was particularly pleased to be asked to index *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland, vol. 3*, as it covers the nineteenth-century origins of many Edinburgh publishers, including T&T Clark, for whom he was a part-time managing editor between 1995 and 2002. Philip's non-indexing interests include digital photography and family history research.

**Liza Furnival** has been a freelance indexer for more than 25 years, specializing in medicine and related fields including subjects such as molecular biology, complementary therapy and public health. Recent indexing projects have included the *International pharmacopoeia* (World Health Organization) and *The forensic use of bioinformation: ethical issues* (Nuffield Council on Bioethics). She has a degree in Zoology (plus Physiology and Biochemistry) from Reading University, and before becoming an indexer worked in the medical research laboratories at Groote Schuur Hospital, Cape Town, just along the corridor from Christiaan Barnard. She is a long-time member of the Society of Indexers, attaining Fellowship status in 1993, and regularly attends SI conferences. She is a keen member of her local bridge club, enjoys gardening (in theory more than practice) and has recently rediscovered the pleasures of cycling.

### ***Background information***

The **Wheatley Medal** was established in 1961 by the then Library Association and the Society of Indexers to recognize and encourage excellence in indexing. The panel of judges includes representatives from the Society, from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) and from the academic community. Further information and a list of past winners is available on the Society of Indexers website ([www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk))

The **Society of Indexers** was established in 1957 and is the only professional association of indexers in the UK, it aims to promote indexing, the quality of indexes and the profession of indexing. In addition to its well-respected distance-learning course, it runs a programme of workshops at various venues throughout the UK, and publishes a journal (*The Indexer*) and a series of occasional papers on specialized aspects of indexing. Publishers and others searching for an indexer need look no further than the Society's directory of *Indexers Available*, online at [www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk), where they will also find considerable advice on commissioning indexes.

For further information about the Wheatley Medal and about the Society of Indexers, contact the administrator ([admin@indexers.org.uk](mailto:admin@indexers.org.uk)) or visit the website:  
**[www.indexers.org.uk](http://www.indexers.org.uk)**

*Ann Kingdom*  
*Chair, Society of Indexers Marketing Committee*