

TDK Australian Audio Book Award 1991

Michelle Hetherington, the Award Secretary, reports on the winners and explains that the award is beginning to fulfil its aims

THE WINNERS of the TDK Australian Audio Book Award 1991 were announced at a function in Sydney on 12 November 1991.

The winners are: Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI), winner of the Adult Literature Award and overall winner for their production of *Touching the Rock* by John M Hull and narrated by Lawrence Bruce. The Royal Blind Society of New South Wales won the Children/Young Adult Literature Award for their production of *The Clinker* by Roger Vaughan Carr, narrated by Bill Conn.

The presentation function was hosted by Professor Betty Watts, Deputy Chair of the National Library Council and Chair of the National Advisory Committee of Library Services to People with Disabilities. The function was attended by 180 guests representing producers of audio books, publishers, recording industry representatives and associated interested groups and consumers. After the enthusiastic announcement of the winners by Ms Andrea Stretton of the SBS Book Show and Masterpieces, and the presentation of the awards, guests enjoyed a superb cocktail buffet.

Christian Blind Mission International (CBMI) is a non-profit organisation which aims to make available to print-handicapped people a range of good-quality Christian books in audio format. CBMI produces audio books for circulation through its own library service, which is specifically for the use of print-handicapped people, and is now making audio books available to a wider group including public libraries and house-bound people. CBMI was also the winner of the inaugural Audio Book Award in 1988 for their production of *A Circle of Quiet* by Madeleine L'Engle, narrated by Irene Pappas. Lawrence Bruce has been a professional broadcaster for 25 years.

The Royal Blind Society of NSW (RBS) is a non-profit organisation working with people of all ages to minimise the effects of severe visual impairment and blindness. The society has been producing audio books since 1954. Like CBMI, RBS' audio books are primarily available through its own library service which is especially for print-handicapped people, but also through other libraries serving people who are blind or print-handicapped. Bill Conn has worked in theatre, radio drama, comedy, children's television and voice-over work. He has narrated many books for the Royal Blind Society including one of the winners of last year's award, the *Great World*.

Touching the Rock by John M Hull, is the biography of three years of John's life and his experience of being blind after his 'last sensation of light' in 1983. It is narrated by Lawrence Bruce. Produced by Christian Blind Mission International, PO Box 5, Kew, Vic 3101. 6 cassettes (2 track) in 2 plastic boxes; 9 hours. \$30.00. Available for sale to public libraries and to individuals who are print-handicapped.

The Clinker by Roger Vaughan Carr, tells how 13-year-old Rust comes to spend the summer with his great-grandparents, and is consumed with self-doubt as to whether he can live up to the responsibilities they lay on him. It is narrated by Bill Conn. Produced by the Royal Blind Society of New South Wales, PO Box 1976, Burwood, NSW 2134. 3 cassettes (2 track) in a plastic folder. 4 hours and 20 minutes. \$13.25. Available for sale to libraries.



The Winners of the 1991 TDK Australian Audio Book Award. From left: Beth Lodge and Lawrence Bruce from Christian Blind Mission International, and Carley Tucker and Bill Conn from the Royal Blind Society.

The National Library of Australia established the TDK Australian Audio Book Award (previously the National Audio Book-of-the-Year Award) in 1988 with the aims:

- to improve the quality of audio books produced in Australia;
 - to give recognition to quality audio books produced in Australia;
 - to promote the availability of audio books in Australia.
- 'Quality' in this context refers to the standard of the production rather than the literary merit of the books.

Both the Judges and the Committee are confident that the award is beginning to fulfil its aims now. The National Library is grateful to TDK Australia for their sponsorship and encouragement in improving the quality and availability of Australian audio books.