

Best and worst dressed at the ELTons

by **Mike S. Boyle**

mikesboyle.com, 23rd May 2014

<http://www.mikesboyle.com/post/86601988344/best-and-worst-dressed-at-the-eltons>

MIKE S. BOYLE

The life and opinions of the author of many fun and useful books for people learning English

Best and worst dressed at the ELTons

Ha ha, made you click! Someone really should do an ELTons Awards Show fashion slide show, as there were lots of very stylish and well-dressed people at the event.* And it's certainly not every day that you have a chance to see ELT publishing people in formal wear.

Anyway, a quick recap of the awards for those who missed them:

Skillful (the series I co-wrote) did not win.
Inclusiveness was a major theme among the winners.
Michael Swan won a lifetime achievement award.
image

Before any of that, I just wanted to thank the British Council for putting together a live stream of the event that was very polished, with multiple camera angles, graphics, theme music, etc. It was really first rate.

Although my series did not win in the category of Excellence in Course Innovation, the team that won was very worthy. The winner was a very interesting project I didn't know about called Dyslexia for Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (Dystefl). All of us have had, or will have, dyslexic students in our careers so everyone should take advantage of the resources from Dystefl.

Inclusiveness was a theme in other categories, most notably the winner for Innovation in Teacher Resources, The Disabled Access Friendly campaign led by Katie Quartano and Paul Shaw. This is another great project I did not know about and found very interesting and important. Also, Katie and Paul gave a somewhat risqué acceptance speech filled with the sort of witty double entendres you would never find in a mainstream ELT textbook. Barriers are being broken left and right!

There was also a professional host, Stuart Maconie, a BBC presenter who made lots of clever jokes, many of which I did not understand as they seemed to revolve around obscure British celebrities of the past era and/or characteristic things and places in the north of England. I liked Stuart Maconie. I was impressed that the ELTons had a real host who could liven up a room. I was very fond of a running joke he made about another also-ran in my category, “Teddy Eddie,” as a giant teddy bear drowning his sorrows at the bar. (The Teddy Eddie people might not have liked that so much.)

I also know that some of his cracks about Greece did not go over well with the viewers and award winners based in Greece. This was sort of a counterpoint to the evening’s theme of inclusiveness, as were the insidious references to “the North” that I don’t think very many of the online viewers were able to appreciate. And on this point, I debated whether to mention this, but it seemed that for some reason the ELTons stage did not have a ramp for wheelchairs. This oversight turned out to be a bit awkward, to say the least, when an award was handed out to a disabled access campaigner who uses a wheelchair. I’m sure no offense was intended, of course.

Finally, there was Michael Swan. Some of you know him personally. But if you are like me, until yesterday the word “Swan” made you think of a book and not a man, and you may have spent most of your life saying things such as, “Swan says it’s fine to use that as a relative pronoun for people” without ever really considering that there is a person, Michael Swan, who wrote that book and many, many others. Well, now I know that Michael Swan is a deeply modest, intelligent, and gracious gentleman who made sure to keep his remarks short so that the attendees could hurry up and get their after-show drinks at the bar.

(* I said I wasn’t going to criticize fashion choices but I do just want to point out one tiny tinytinytiny thing, which is that lanyards with ID badges hanging from them are, all things being equal, perhaps not the best look with formalwear. But this is an industrywide thing. People in the ELT world love their lanyards and at every conference you will always spot people miles away, days after the conference is ended, still wearing their lanyards.)