* Standards for indexes to learned and scientific periodicals. (Preprint from The
Indexer, Autumn 1960.)

Subject classifying and indexing of libraries and literature. By John Metcalfe.
Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1959.

TDCK: experience with indexing and retrieving by UDC and uniterms. By
J. A. Schüller. The Hague, Technisch Documentatie en Informatiecentrum
voor de Krijgsmacht, 1960.


* Treatment of special material in libraries. By Robert L. Collison. London, Aslib,
1957.


What is an index? A few notes on indexes and indexers. By Henry B. Wheatley.
London, Longmans, Green, for The Index Society, 1879.

Affairs, 1961.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**

The high school library: its organization and administration, by C. G. VISWANATHAN.
16s.

Mr. Viswanathan’s writings on librarianship are based on extensive experience
in the United Kingdom and at home, and they are invaluable contributions to the
literature of librarianship. In this revised edition of a text first published five years
ago he caters for those planning, organizing and administering school libraries.
In his foreword, Professor Raymond Irwin states: “A well equipped and well man-
aged library is indeed the foundation stone of any modern educational structure”,
and this truth is not fully appreciated even in this country. Mr. Viswanathan
obviously believes it, and this book will prove a sure guide to those concerned with
the provision of school libraries. It covers planning and equipment; finance; the
education and training of the librarian; basic reference books; administration and
routine; extension work and publicity; instruction in the use of books and libraries;
and recommendations for future development of school libraries.

School librarians, trained and untrained, will acquire useful information from
this lucidly written volume, which should contribute much towards the provision
and improvement of school libraries in India. Adequate school libraries are essen-
tial preliminaries to an early, full appreciation of public, college, university and
national libraries. They should receive prior consideration, not only in India, but
throughout the world.

J. L. T.
Towards information retrieval, by R. A. Fairthorne.

This book is a collection of articles on the ideas behind information retrieval. They have all appeared in print before and are reproduced without any updating. In a field where highly-mechanised systems have developed within a year or two it may well be asked whether the book has any relevance today.

Surprisingly the articles have dated very little, although it is annoying to find (pages 42 to 51) a detailed description of a system now seven years old without any comments on how it worked out in practice. But the book's main recommendation is its author: R. A. Fairthorne is one of the rare people who can see the problems of information retrieval from both points of view, the reference librarian's and the mathematician's. The latter uses a battery of techniques, some highly sophisticated, and it takes a penetrating mind to see which can be validly applied in a particular complex situation. In the articles they are introduced with a minimum of fuss and their limitations are discussed; although sometimes the applications are rather artificial.

The defects of the book spring from the variety of journals and audiences its chapters were intended for. At one extreme "The Patterns of Retrieval" is perhaps too elementary for the librarian; at the other "Algebraic Representation of Storage and Retrieval Languages" is intended for the mathematical graduate. The remaining articles are written for people whose hearts sink when they see algebra, and here the limitations are obvious—there was not enough space for the details. The defects of symbolic logic are discussed (pages 6 and 7) at length, but the formal basis is compressed (page 8) into a grisly little appendix; then lattice algebra is mentioned several times but never explained. There is also a fair amount of repetition and the change of approach from one chapter to another can be disconcerting.

Perhaps these criticisms are too harsh; the individual articles are balanced and a broad spectrum of readers will find them stimulating. The index* ("Monkey typists, possible reduction of their labours") catches the spirit of the book; the author has explored a difficult subject and brought back glowing accounts.

David M. Collison.

* Compiled by the American expert Calvin N. Mooers.

Newnes dictionary of dates. Compiled by Robert Collison.

This is one of the most useful general reference tools that we have encountered for many years. Scholars, students, librarians and indexers will glean invaluable information from perusing these pages, and will be tempted to dip further and further into the mass of facts presented. The first part consists of an alphabetical arrangement of persons, places and events, and the second part contains under the days of the year the appropriate anniversaries of people and events. Obviously the work is selective, and the specialist will quibble regarding omissions, and possibly over some of the material included. For example, Sir James Young Simpson appears only under Anaesthesia as "Robert" Simpson; William Harvey is stated to have discovered Blood, Circulation of the, in 1615, an earlier date than hitherto.
encountered; Sir William Osler was born in 1849, not 1848, and the description “Canadian professor of medicine” will appear inadequate to Oslerians when applied to Oxford’s famous Regius Professor of Medicine. Under Guy’s Hospital we noted that it was founded in 1722, and immediately turned to St. Bartholomew’s Hospital for similar information, to find no entry. However, under Rahere we note that he founded St. Bartholomew’s Hospital in 1123. This confirmed our suspicions that this book badly needs an index if readers are to make full use of it for reference purposes. As a further example: under 19th April we learn that Lord Byron died in 1824, and from the alphabetical arrangement we learn that he was born in 1788, but what day was he born on? No doubt this and similar information regarding others is contained somewhere in this book, but one has to stumble upon it. Obviously an index would swell the book considerably, but we sincerely hope that this essential feature will be incorporated in future editions.

There must be further editions of a book of this nature, for it must be maintained up-to-date, and there will be demands for expansion from specialists. These will have to be carefully considered, or the book will become a multi-volume encyclopaedia. It now stands as an invaluable desk-side companion for any thinking individual from school-age upwards, and any enquirer can broaden his knowledge by browsing through its pages. Indexers will welcome this compilation by the Treasurer of the Society of Indexers, based on vast experience as a reference librarian, and will make full use of its contents.

J. L. T.

DISCUSSION MEETINGS 1962/1963

Tuesday, October 16, 1962. Chairman’s Address. (Mr. G. Norman Knight, M.A.)


Thursday, January 24, 1963. Mr. J. Davies, I.B.M. British Laboratories. “Mechanical Aids to Indexing”.

Thursday, February 28, 1963. Mr. E. J. Coates, F.L.A., Editor, on “British Technology Index”.


Thursday, April 25, 1963. Discussion on “Remuneration for Indexing”.

Meetings will be at 6.0 p.m. preceded by tea at 5.30. Members may bring guests. All meetings will be held at The Library Association, Chaucer House, Malet Place, London, W.C.1, with the exception of that held on 28th March, 1963, which will be at Holborn Central Library, Theobalds Road, W.C.1.

E. Alan Baker,
General Secretary,
September, 1962.