The Editor, *The Indexer*.

Dear Sir,

**Improving Indexes**

I congratulate Mr. Bryon on his paper 'Let's have an Improvement in British Book Indexes' (reprinted in the Spring issue from Smith's *Trade News*) but must express surprise and disappointment that, at the time of writing it, he apparently knew nothing of our Society, its work, or its journal, for nowhere does he mention them. 'There is no consumer protection for readers or students . . .' he states; but have we not tried, for the past seven or eight years, to provide that protection by constantly crying out against the lack of indexes, or the provision of indifferent or bad indexes? He also asserts: 'Fortunately there is evidence to suggest that some publishers have seen the writing on the wall . . .' I suggest the Society has added considerably to that writing on the wall.

The Society played a prominent part in the compilation of the British Standard to which Mr. Bryon refers. He also mentions the Wheatley Medal, in the recommendations for the award of which the Society participates. It is a pity that such a valuable paper should contain no reference to the one body which exists to overcome the evils of which the author wrote.

Yours faithfully,

A. R. Hewitt.

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**BOOK REVIEWS**


These annual seminars form an integral part of the courses organised by the DRTC, which was established in 1962, and also sponsors the quarterly periodical *Library science with a slant to documentation*. The subjects of the third seminar were depth classification and subject-heading work; and this bulky volume in duplicate typescript consists mainly of papers on the design of depth schedules for the Colon classification scheme, including tentative schedules for the detailed classification of personal bibliography, food technology, tobacco crops, disease (medicine), and the production engineering of springs, boilers, missiles, rocket engines, electron tubes, semiconductors and transistors, and nuclear reactors. The two papers in the subject-heading area consist of a contribution on the problems of homonyms in chain-derived subject-index headings, and one on chain procedure by Dr. Ranganathan, who also contributes a paper on the DRTC, and the opening address on documentation.

It must be pointed out that, apart from an interesting survey by Ejnar Wahlin (the only European contributor) of 'Classification systems and their purposes', the contents may be viewed, effectively, as contributions to the development of the Colon classification and its associated disciplines. The 'Depth classification' papers are extensions of its schedules; the examples and problems in the 'Subject headings' papers are Colon-derived; and the terminology throughout presupposes a familiarity with Dr. Ranganathan's philosophy and vocabulary. This is not an adverse criticism, but merely a necessary statement of the scope of the publication. Students of current developments in information retrieval methods, the analytico-synthetic approach, and the Colon classification in particular, as indeed of the problems of classifying in any of the subject fields listed earlier, will find these proceedings both interesting and indispensable; while the papers on subject-heading work are inevitably of wide 'non-Ranganathanian' application.

Many will note with interest, and a few with resignation, that the Colon classification now prescribes the additional use of 'zero' as a sectorizing device, or empty digit, for notational extrapolation at the beginning of an array, and has also introduced an 'equals' sign as a connecting symbol for use with the alphabetical device when representing a multinomial which is not an initonym or acronym'. Non-initiates who find this
confusing will at least join the reviewer in admiration of the dynamic and dedicated industry which are so much in evidence in subject classification and indexing in India today. This publication may be obtained from: Documentation Research and Training Centre, 112 Cross Road 11, Malleswaram, Bangalore 3; no price is given.

T. S. Morgan.

World list of abbreviations of scientific, technological and commercial organisations by E. A. Buttress, 3rd ed., Leonard Hill. 1966. vi, 186 pp. 35s.

This is the 3rd edition of a work originally published in 1954. Previous editions have included addresses but in view of the increase to over 9,000 organizations listed the editor has 'reluctantly decided to discontinue the recording of addresses'. However a short bibliography of works from which addresses may be traced is included. The prime criticisms that must be made, apart from omissions which are inevitable, are: the lack of translations in English for some of the names of organizations, and the lack of any indication of nationality for the national organizations. A number of entries refer to organizations which are now defunct—this is not indicated.

Simon Francis.

British initials and abbreviations compiled by I. A. Wilkes. 2nd ed. Leonard Hill. 1966. 125, [38] pp. 45s.

In contrast with the work by Buttress noted above this does include addresses and in some cases telephone numbers of what is claimed to be 'practically every organization in Great Britain, along with all associations, Government Departments, societies and institutions native to this country. It also includes all the international agencies and organizations of which the British Government or British professional bodies are members' (dust wrapper). While the latter is useful it would be even more so if the name of the British member were given.

Simon Francis.


Containing over 21,000 abbreviations, this book replaces the one bearing the same title which was published in 1949.

Its scope is much wider than the others reviewed above as it includes general, commercial, technical, legal, and geographic abbreviations in English, and it also includes a very wide range of commercial abbreviations in the major European languages. The other books reviewed are concerned solely with abbreviations for organizations, and although this volume includes hundreds of such abbreviations it is concerned with them to a much less extent; but it does contain some which do not appear in these volumes, and to this extent supplements them in their own fields. Its great value, however, is in the unlimited variety and great quantity of both common and unfamiliar abbreviations. This is an essential tool for people concerned with using and writing or compiling books, and also for every library of any kind.

L.M.H.


This book by Professor Irwin, Director of the School of Librarianship and Archives at University College, London, is a revised and enlarged edition of his The origins of the English library published in 1958. This in turn was based mainly on articles that appeared in the Library Association Record, but a new chapter has now been added, a chapter heading has been altered, and revision includes an extended list of sources. Together with The heritage of the English library this collection of essays represents a scholarly investigation of certain aspects of library history, thoroughly documented and most fascinating. They do indeed 'give vitality and interest to the often meagre facts', ranging from about 300 B.C. to the nineteenth century, and enlivened with interesting anecdotes and social history.
Professor Irwin covers a wide field, gleaning scanty material and presenting it in an attractive setting which illuminates the bare facts. His book can be read through, or dipped into at intervals, with profit. Every librarian should read it, and retain a personal copy for future reference; no student of the history of librarianship can afford to neglect it as a major source of information for examination purposes. J.L.T.


The Editor since 1951 of Library Science Abstracts has made four separate tours in Europe and the United States investigating indexing and abstracting services for librarianship. His survey covers the history of indexing and abstracting services, and describes and compares in detail sixteen of those now current. Information provided includes policy, criteria for selection of material and coverage, examples of entries also being given. Author abstracts, quality of abstracts, classification of contents, author and subject indexes, translation work, editorial co-operation, speed of production, and assessment of the services are among the subjects discussed. Suggestions are made for general application, and a tentative list of subject headings is provided.

The tables and recommendations included in this survey provide food for much thought. International co-operation resulting in the standardization of terminology, and possibly in the preparation of a joint abstracting service, is desirable. The best features from each service could be incorporated, but there would probably be drawbacks, such as increased delay and higher cost. As a constant user of, and subscriber to, Library Science Abstracts, I have great admiration for the zeal which has resulted in improvements on the earlier issues, maintained the contents up-to-date, and produced the cumulative indexes. Generally speaking, the abstracts are adequate, and my only criticism has been that the abstractors sometimes take a long time returning the journals to the Library Association library.

The majority of librarians take little interest in the literature of their profession, except when studying for examinations, and the abstractors were found to be incapable of indexing their entries. There is no reason why all librarians should not follow up the literature of their profession, if only to keep up to date with modern developments. Library Science Abstracts does much towards promoting current awareness, and this survey by its Editor indicates that he is prepared to consider improvements in indexing and abstracting services, on an international basis. If such improvements included more frequent publication, say monthly, and at a price within the reach of individual subscribers, they would be welcomed. J.L.T.


This report needs very careful reading if its full value is to be realised. It does contain a great deal of information on current problems, but like so many books published since the war it has a number of terms used with special meanings. At the rate of the present growth of knowledge this is probably unavoidable, but it does mean that the reader must refer back to earlier chapters to find how a term has been used.

Such a necessity draws immediate attention to the worst and most extraordinary feature of this publication. It lacks an index. It is lamentable to find any current work without an index, but it is almost beyond belief when that work is concerned with the problem of transferring information from one person to another. It is obvious from the introductory comments that the index was sacrificed on the altar of speed of publication, as the report appeared within six weeks of the end of the conference. The editors are to be congratulated on their speed, but
surely another month would not have mattered if as a result a really good index could have been provided. Lack of it reduces the value of the report.

It is of course true that many conference papers only have an immediate value and long-term reference to them is unlikely, but the information contained in this report is likely to be sought for a number of years. The conference concerned itself with the whole problem of information transfer as it affects the university of the future. Its purpose was 'to provide a design for evolution of a large university library into a new information transfer system that could become operational in the decade beginning in 1970'. Its concern was purely with technical and operational matters. This would seem to add to the general value of the work, as discussion of the legal problems for example would only have been of interest to the American reader, whereas technical problems are the same everywhere.

The report sees the university library of the future as the core of the university's information services. It seeks particularly to avoid the danger that the newer services will bypass the library, which would then become just a monument to the glories of the past. Anyone concerned with the problem of how libraries can cope with the vast flood of information now appearing in so many new forms will find much to interest him in this report. It speaks the language of the present—computers, augmented catalogues, etc.—but it also recognises the value of such ageless features of the library as browsing. How to integrate the two to develop the best in new and old is its concern. It is therefore a book to read and ponder upon.

Brian Redfern.

This guide contains chapters on the author and his index, marking entries, copy to cards, editing the cards, typing the cards, and has three pages of bibliography of books, pamphlets, publisher's instructions, and reference works. There is an index to this guide.

The guide covers headings, synonyms, antonyms, cross-references, abbreviations, indexing of names and places, and page references.

'A good index has been compared to an inanimate memory, where information is stored to be recovered quickly and precisely', states the author.

Simply written, the guide appears to be intended for the beginner. However, it would be a good addition to the library of any indexer.

Gerald A. Willey.


Chapters in this report include:
1 Dissemination versus retrieval.
2 Indexing by means of Keyword in Context.
3 Organization of a Bibliographical KWIC Index.
4 A Derived Code for the identification of bibliographical names.
5 Automatic preparation of KWIC indexes.

This report has a large bibliography. The author indicates that only a few KWIC index services have been installed on an experimental basis.

He says that keywords in context permit the cross-correlation of subjects to an extent not realizable by conventional procedures. The author concludes that KWIC indexes provide an invaluable basis for the compilation of reference material by professional cataloguers and indexers.

Gerald A. Willey.

Covered in this book are such topics as documentation, information retrieval, consistency of human indexing, consistency of human judgments of relevance, corporate author cataloguing and the technical report literature, and thesauri for mechanized indexing. Additional topics written about are machine compilation and editing of printed alphabetical subject indexes; selected words in full title (SWIFT), a new program for computer indexing; automatic subject indexing from textual condensations; linear versus inverted file searching on serial access machines; selective dissemination of information; and DSD Technical Information Center, a total approach to library mechanization.

In the first chapter, Mortimer Taube says, 'There is an opportunity now to concern ourselves not with applying set rules to the cataloguing of a single item, but with evolving new rules for the organization of total collections and new bibliographical services. If librarians take advantage of this great opportunity, theirs can emerge as one of the major intellectual professions of our time.'

'Consistency of Human Indexing' is one of the more interesting chapters. In this chapter it is stated that 'Consistency among indexers is desirable on the assumption that it improves the effectiveness of information retrieval; this assumption, in turn, is valid if the terms selected by indexers for a given document are all the terms properly descriptive of that document, and if they fully suffice to retrieve it.'

Gerald A. Willey.

F.A.C., reviewing (in The Steam and Heating Engineer, February 1966) the I.H.V.E. Guide: 1965 (3rd) edition, published by The Institution of Heating and Ventilating Engineers at £5 10s. including postage, which was originally published 22 years ago, writes of the index 'in these days, surely the time has come for this work to be done by a professional indexer'.

The first six volumes (1958-1964) of the Index to Periodical Articles Related to Law have been cumulated and bound into one issue. Author and subject indexes and a list of all periodicals indexed are included. Copies are available from Stanford University Law Library at $15.00 or $25 to subscribers beginning with volume 8 (1966).

The 3rd ed. of the Union List of Serials in Libraries of the United States and Canada has been published by the H. W. Wilson Co. in five volumes at $120 after more than six years of preparation. It includes particulars of 156,499 titles held in 956 libraries. Printing was undertaken by Balding and Mansell, using the same procedures as they used for printing the British Museum catalogue; it took two years to print.

'Many names had to be introduced and not all of them will be familiar to the average reader. An index would have helped in keeping track of these names and episodes.' This complaint occurs in a review by Ellen Sue Politella in The Living Chain (U.S.A.) of September 12, 1965, and the book in question is Ten decades of praise by Sister Mary Hilary (Wisconsin-Racine.)