one—“My only criticism is that the index is too selective if the book is to be used for
reference.” From The Junior Bookshelf: “If a book of this nature is to be used as an
information book, then it will rely greatly on the quality of its index.” From the cur-
current Children’s Book News: “I greatly missed an index” and again “There is a
useful bibliography and a full index . . . the book is a model of what a biography for
young people should be”. The Autumn Children’s Book number of the Times Liter-
ary Supplement has this to say in a review of one book: “The index is a very sketchy
affair”. The Consumers’ Association magazine Which in their analysis of children’s
encyclopaedias makes a point of mentioning the presence and quality of each index.
Their summary is brief: “A good index is essential for children over eleven”. Any
non-fiction book is a book of reference to a child. If I am faced with two books of other-
wise equal merit on a particular subject, only one of which has an index, then that is the
one that I choose for the school library.

INDEXES FOR CHILDREN’S
BOOKS

‘Every book that is to be used for refer-
ence, even by young juniors, needs an index.
It takes very little time for an average nine-
year-old to find his way with one. A variety
of ‘hide and seek’ with the children racing to
discover the reference is practically all that is
needed. There is a special art in compiling
an index to meet the needs of young child-
en, and expert advice at this stage in the
production of a book is too rarely sought.’—
From Books and the teacher by Antony
Kamm and Boswell Taylor (University of
London Press).

Dealing with the problems of choosing
books for use in class, these authors say:
‘Beware of any book intended for reference,
even at a junior level, which has no index.
It will be virtually useless in the classroom
or library. And a glance at an index will
often give a much better idea of the scope of
a book than an examination of the contents
page. A very good way of making a quick
assessment of the value of a book, or of
comparing two similar books, is to use the
index to find a reference to an aspect of the
subject which particularly interests you.’

INDEXING HINTS FOR
BEGINNERS—WITH
SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON
TIME-SAVING

Jessica M. Kerr

When I started my self-taught career in
indexing, I had no equipment apart from my
own experience working in libraries and Mr.
G. V. Carey’s admirable little book published
by the Cambridge University Press. Conse-
quently I had to make all my mistakes and
gain my experience the hard way, and even
now, after several years, I still fall into
grievous errors and learn by them.

So it may be helpful to others like myself,
to read about some of the traps which can be
so frustrating and the way to avoid them.
Every indexer is by no means a typist (even
a hit-and-miss typist like myself) and there
are publishers who will accept neat cards, or
hand-written slips. But here in the United
States (where I am living now) typing is ex-
pected. My own experience has been that
typing from index cards is just another
opportunity for mistakes and, in fact, I be-
lieve that most slips and errors occur when
the entries on the card are transferred to the
typewriter. Most of what follows applies to
a typed index, but some of the suggestions
are appropriate to any kind of index.
1. From the very first card, make every entry as clear, neat and accurate as if it were to be used by the printer; if a card is untidy in any way, tear it up and make another.

2. Before placing a card in the correct position in the box you are using, check it again with the text. This may seem over-careful and time-consuming, but actually it will save many a minute in the final stages when mistakes, oversights and errors have a way of piling up!

3. Galley-sheets are difficult to cope with in revision (at the beginning it is all only too easy!) and with a big index it saves much fruitless handling and confusion if the sheets are clipped firmly together in groups of ten and identified by a label marked clearly ‘1-9’, ‘10-19’ and so on. Then they should be laid out in sequence on the table. Galley-sheets have an uncanny way of getting tangled up and out-of-order; and, as the work goes on and the indexer begins to feel a little pressed, this becomes more and more frustrating. In an index of, for example, 1,000 entries, one mislaid card may mean an extra hour’s work. In any case, be sure to underline clearly every subject used even though it may appear more than once on the same page. There is another method which—if space permits—is a great time-saver. Lay the whole batch of galley-sheets on the table. Check page 1 for entries. Then mark it in the top right-hand corner (preferably in red pencil) ‘1’. With a drawing-pin (or thumb-tack) pin it lightly to the wall and so on right through the proofs, with as many pages as possible on the top row, and then start a second row, and so on. The rows may slightly over-lap as it is easy to lift the lower half of a sheet. Should a problem of any kind arise it is amazingly easy to check back to the proof, added to which the sheets remain in proper sequence and tidy.

4. Keep an extra box or tray for ‘Pending’ cards—entries requiring special research or presenting a temporary problem. Mark such cards just as clearly as the others but keep separate until ‘cleared’ for the index. Never allow stray cards to lie around where you are working.

5. Never let a card go into the box without its page numbers. This is a common and costly error which will be decidedly unpopular when your index arrives at the publisher’s office. Being particularly prone to this mistake (especially when distracted for a minute in order to look up a reference) I have had a rubber stamp made which says in large red ink print ‘Page-numbers’ and I hope that this particular trap will cease to torment me.

6. Be sure to keep the cards in correct order after typing. It is tempting and easy to cast them aside in a pile and then have to hunt wildly for one of them at some later stage. It is just as easy to put them back in correct alphabetical order.

7. Stack required reference books within easy reach.

8. Many publishers state definitely at the outset how many ‘units’ to a line of index can be allowed—usually 34 or 32. The counting of these ‘units’ (punctuation, spaces, brackets, etc.) must be accurate and it takes up a considerable amount of time no matter how it is done. But it is certainly much easier when done on the card with a line clearly drawn to mark the limit of each line of entries. It is difficult, tedious and time-wasting to do this while typing.

9. Keep both galley-sheets and cards until the index is finally cleared with the publisher.

The moral of all this really is: do as much of the work on the cards as possible. Not only will this lighten the typing work but it will also provide a substitute index which can be used in an emergency. Do not write little notes, abbreviations, or symbols to yourself—60 cards or so later you will have forgotten why you put them there!

All this will seem rather obvious and elementary to expert indexers of long experience, but they represent my own problems and mistakes in the early stages, and will, I hope, be helpful to those who are also teaching themselves.
AN OBDURATE COMPUTER

We have just learnt of an American computer which, when called upon to assist in the indexing of an important historico-religious work, has 'dug in its heels' against a numerical order for kings, popes, etc., insisting upon a strict alphabetical order.

Thus, unless the machine can be 'brought to heel' (to vary the metaphor), we may expect to find certain occupants of the Holy See listed egregiously as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pope</th>
<th>Papal Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pius VIII</td>
<td>Pius II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pius XI</td>
<td>Pius VII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pius V</td>
<td>Pius VI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pius I</td>
<td>Pius X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pius IV</td>
<td>Pius III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pius IX</td>
<td>Pius XII</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G.N.K.

A.P.H.'s ODE TO A COMPUTER

A computer, we learn, is to be used to index the two million or so tune titles which are the concern of the Performing Right Society. Costing £115,000, the computer was welcomed on 1st June, 1966, with an ode composed and recited by the Society's Vice-President, Sir Alan Herbert, whose own highly amusing indexes to his Misleading cases (1932) and Uncommon law (1935) are still greatly relished by indexers.

Sir Alan described the computer as 'a wonderful, unnatural toy'. But, in view of recent unfortunate experiences on the part of two prominent computer owners, the Post Office and the Inland Revenue, the complete accuracy of two of the lines of his ode must be considered a matter of doubt:

A computer, once having computed
Cannot be belied or refuted.

G.N.K.

The following comes from The Times, 2nd June, 1966:

Lines to a Computer—

Madam—or Lady—for you have to be,
With so much craft, and such insides, a She,
The Muse of Music has no special name
And I propose we christen you 'The Dame'.

So Sir Alan Herbert addressed the first computer in Britain to work wholly in the service of music.

—The Computer replied

This was the computer's answer, prompted by Vivian Ellis, at a ceremony last night:
A computer's supposed to be neuter,
But I'm not averse to a suitor
Because sex, nowadays,
Comes in all sorts of ways
And I'd love A.P.H. as a tutor.

Thus with science and art so well blended,
I hope that we'll both be commended
And that you, dear A.P.
Will refuse Jennie Lee
And choose me, I.C.T.—message ended.

A STORMY REVIEWER

The story can now, I feel, be told—a tale against myself.

In 1958 I was commissioned by Messrs. Putnam to compile an index for their 850 page Two centuries of Covent Garden opera, by Harold Rosenthal. Although the allotted time necessitated the usual rush—rather more so in this case because the book was required to appear in time for the bicentenary celebrations—I was determined to provide a worth-while index and gave much thought to the style of its presentation. I was also in constant touch with the author.

It is no part of my intention to boost my own wares, but in view of what is to come I must in fairness mention at this stage that the index proofs were duly read by the author, who expressed his warm approval. The publishers also praised my effort. And I am bound to add that, so far as one is ever
satisfied with one’s own indexes, I felt fairly satisfied with this one.

Then came the book’s publication and the subsequent reviews, several of which referred to my index. Thus the critic of the monthly *Musical Times* spoke of ‘43 pages of the finest index I have ever come across in any book of this type’, while Sir John Squire in one of his weekly columns commented: ‘If anybody wants to find anything about an obscure composer, conductor or singer of the eighteenth or nineteenth century, he may be sure of finding the name in the admirable index of this book. I made the test myself.’

But it was not good enough for *The New Statesman & Nation* (a periodical I do not normally read), whose music critic was then Desmond Shawe-Taylor—I believe he is now employed in a similar capacity by *The Sunday Times*. Now Mr. Shawe-Taylor is (or was) noted for his drastic castigation of the books entrusted to him for review. Aware of this reputation and anxious to forestall such treatment of *Two centuries*, my author had astutely invited him to read the proofs of its text, which he did.

Thus deprived of his natural prey—although in the course of his notice he did manage to hint that he could have written the book better himself—Mr. Shawe-Taylor vented his vituperation on the unfortunate indexer, to whose work he devoted no fewer than 25 damning lines, possibly a record amount of space to be bestowed upon the index in an ordinary book review.

After praising the book’s format, the critic proceeds: ‘I am sure they [the publishers] feel that they have done us equally proud in the way of an index; but they have not’ and then he alludes to the ‘space-wasting references to the names of arias and characters’. But I hold that a comprehensive index to a book on opera must certainly include both. Who, he asks, is going to look up ‘Donna è mobile, La’ under D?* (but where else? Would Mr. Shawe-Taylor index *The New Statesman* under T?). ‘Or “First Lady (in *The Magic Flute*)” under F?’ But the text devotes 15 and 5 lines respectively to its two references to this character. Surely an indexer would be remiss in ignoring them.

The critic next descended to personalities. ‘We begin to wonder,’ he exclaims, ‘whether the compiler has ever been inside an opera house.’ In my letter of rejoinder, which *The New Statesman* saw fit to publish only in part, I set his doubts at rest by pointing out that ‘I first attended Covent Garden (to hear Emmy Destinn in *Madame Butterfly*) in 1908—possibly before Mr. Shawe-Taylor was born†—and I have been to many opera performances since then’. Finally comes this not unamusing passage: ‘The name of the compiler, Mr. G. Norman Knight, is printed at the head of his index: one of the White Knights, I fancy?’ This last sentence shows that the privilege of having one’s name printed above a substantial index, as recommended in the British Standard on *The preparation of indexes*, can be double-edged. As the anonymous author (or authoress) of the masterly *Clerihews for the Society of Indexers* wrote in *The Indexer* this time last year:

> it is only right
> For the publisher to print the indexer’s name
> So he can take any praise (or blame).

[the italics are mine.]

All this happened nine years ago but, as can be guessed from the way I write above, the incident still rankles rather sorely, provoking me to advise music critics, unless and until they have mastered the technique of indexing, to stick to their last. Unfortunately there was a regrettable sequel. A lady founder-member, a Mrs. Partridge, horrified by what she judged to be this exposure of the gross ineptitude as an indexer on the part of the Society’s then secretary, promptly resigned her membership. No doubt Mr. Shawe-Taylor, with his predilection for personalities, would have remarked that it was the Society’s close season for partridges.

G.N.K.

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* One of the author’s statements called it ‘Donna è mobile’ (p. 538).

† In his reply the critic admitted that he was in swaddling clothes at the time.
BIAS IN INDEXING

The following extract is from *Asquith* by Roy Jenkins (Collins), 1964:

What were the merits of the argument? Did Asquith eagerly seize upon the false accusations of a sour and neurotic general (as Lloyd George insisted on regarding Maurice) or did the Prime Minister tear up the truth in order to discomfort his critics and gain a spurious House of Commons victory? Lloyd George, in his speech, rested upon two sets of alternative defences.

The index entry for Maurice in Lloyd George's *War Memoirs* is a remarkable example of importing invective into a section of a book which is normally neutral:

"Maurice, Sir Frederick . . . comfortably placed as any politician, 1675; subservient and unbalanced, 1685; . . . his astonishing arithmetical calculations, 1763-4; the instrument by which the Government was to be thrown out, 1778; . . . his astonishing volte face of 22/4/18, 1780-1 . . . intrigues against the Government, his mind being apparently unhinged, 1784; false allegations against Lloyd George and Bonar Law published by, 1784-6; the tool of astuter men, 1786 . . . his double-dealing denounced by Lloyd George, 1787-8 . . . his grave breach of discipline condoned by Asquith, 1791; dismissed, 1791."

INDEXING MASTERPIECES—1

DR. POWELL’S INDEX TO BOSWELL’S

*Life of Johnson*

E. S. de Beer

George Birkbeck Hill’s edition of Boswell’s *Life of Johnson* was published by the Clarendon Press in 1887. It is in six volumes. The first four contain the *Life*; the fifth contains Boswell’s *Journal of a tour to the Hebrides*; and the sixth the index and some other matter. Boswell’s share consists of the texts of the *Life* and the *Journal*, including everything (notably letters from Johnson and excerpts from his journal) that he had printed in his own editions of the two books, and some foot-notes. All the remaining notes, and the appendixes, no matter what their source, are editorial accretions.

In course of time Hill’s edition went out of print and much fresh information accumulated. It was therefore decided to publish a revision of it, retaining his pagination and many of his notes and appendixes, and gaining additional space for new and expanded notes and appendixes by altering the lay-out of the pages and by increasing the number of pages in each volume. The revision was carried out by Dr. L. F. Powell. Vols. i-iv appeared in 1934, vols. v and vi in 1950. A second edition of vols. v and vi, again Dr. Powell’s work, appeared in 1964; he is now revising vols. i-iv.

Hill’s index was a remarkable achievement in its day and, despite some roughnesses and deformities, ranks among the great indexes. But it has been completely transcended. Dr. Powell’s, as he writes in the preface to his first edition, is based upon Dr. Hill’s general plan, but the additions, due chiefly but not entirely to the new material given in the notes and appendixes, are so numerous, the rearrangement so great, and the new features so important that it may be described, without exaggeration, as a new work.1

His second edition is enlarged and improved.