

BOOK REVIEWS

Indexing for editors, by R. F. Hunnisett.
British Records Association, Archives and
the User No. 2, 1972. 145pp. £1.50.

This extremely useful book is not quite so general as its title seems to indicate. The 'editors' referred to are those of publications of historical records (not of the records themselves), chiefly of Britain in medieval times and two or three subsequent centuries. The author, Dr. Hunnisett, is well qualified to treat of these matters, as he is an Assistant Keeper of Public Records at the Public Record Office and is the author and editor of a number of other works, especially some concerning records of the Middle Ages. He delivered an informative and well-received lecture, 'The Indexing of Record Publications', to the Society of Indexers on March 16, 1972, which ranged over many of the points included in the present book.

The limitations of the scope of his subject, however, should not deter all other editors and indexers in general from reading and studying it, as they will find it highly instructive, even in repetition, in techniques in both crafts. However experienced we may already be, it never comes amiss to refresh our skills. Dr. Hunnisett not only guides us through the manifold problems and ambiguities confronting the editors and indexers of record publications but he also takes the opportunity to state or restate briefly some general principles on indexing practice, with additional recommendations of his own.

It must, however, be remembered that many of his recommendations are applicable to the specialised field he is tilling but are not necessarily valid in general indexing. It may be retorted that this cuts away the ground for criticism, but the book is too interesting generally to accept that, and its title is a general invitation anyway.

For example, his dictum (p. 140) that 'The indexing of persons and places, especially places, is much more efficiently done by the editor than by another person'—an 'overwhelming case,' to use his phrase, which he supports with logical reasons in the realm of records, among them the facts of such an editor's peculiar expertise in this branch of knowledge and the time-saving research he already undertakes in preparing the manuscript—might not apply to other types of book, and even so it rather overlooks the claims of the specialised indexer who is also an authority on medieval affairs. But his argument may well explain the book's title!

Dr. Hunnisett carefully recapitulates and gives his own preferences in the terminology used by indexers, such as 'entries', 'headings', 'modifications', 'cross-references', and so on, and exhaustively describes the methods to be adopted in identifying and spell-

ing as well as indexing the names of places and persons, which in medieval and less generally literate times, not to mention the Latinisation, had a rich and confusing diversity not quite so appreciated in our more regimented and organised day. He very properly, to my mind, is of the opinion that as far as possible the index should appear with modern spellings, accompanied parenthetically by the variant or variants, usually obsolete, transcribed from the ancient documents, and of course cross-referenced where appropriate because of dissimilarities. Thus we might get (p. 12) "Lichfield (Licchefeld, Lichfeld, Lychefeld, Lychfeld)", where Licchefeld, Lychefeld, and Lychfeld might all be entered again as cross-references with 'see Lichfield', but not Lichfeld, a separate entry whose need, says the author, would be highly unlikely, 'since it is almost inconceivable that these two forms [Lichfeld, Lichfeld] should not be adjacent'. This reminds us in a small way of an indexer's need to exercise judgment as well as thoroughness.

An idiom of his own is suggested by the author for abbreviations of the names of counties. He advises no full stops at all (which is in keeping with his general attitude to punctuation: the less the better, which is fair enough), and supplies a complete list of contracted English county names (p. 24) he would like to see adopted. Most of them, in spelling, adhere to the forms recognised by generations of writers, printers, and proof-readers in that 'bible' of style by F. Howard Collins, published by the Oxford University Press, *Authors' & Printers' Dictionary*, but there are some idiosyncratic differences. The absence of a full stop (or full point as a printer would say) after such names as Beds, Berks, Bucks, Cambs, etc., is not a serious matter, although against the old convention—and there is merit in Dr. Hunnisett's contention that time and space are saved in both typing and type-setting by such non-devices, if I may so call them—but it is disconcerting to come up against Corn for Cornwall or Dors for Dorset, an abbreviation, I confess, that irresistibly brings to my mind that ornament of the screen, Diana of that ilk. And why should the well-used Dur., Mon., and War. now appear as Durh, Monm, and Warw (the extra letters do not in any case save any setting)? The familiar Newport, Mon., for example, acquires a new awkwardness as Newport, Monm. There is surely some inconsistency in accepting the accepted Cambs for Cambridgeshire but substituting 'Oxon' for Ox. = Oxfordshire. Graduates of Oxford may feel flattered at such a Latinised choice, but if so, why not the analogous 'Cantab'? Every trade and profession has its own jargon, naturally, but it will not appeal to indexers generally to be faced additionally with a style different from what has long been commonly accepted.

Indexers will read with the utmost benefit Dr. Hunnisett's chapter on how to deal with the intric-

cies of persons' names, his advice applying at large to modern instances as much as to medieval. I find it difficult, however, to accept one or two of his dicta even while deferring to his expert knowledge of the subject of medieval history. Surnames were, as he reminds us, not yet common in those early days, and a man was usually known, if not by his occupation—still a Welsh popular custom—or his place of abode, or as, to take one of the author's examples but with my italics, Hugh son of John. Now Dr. Hunnisett advises the indexing of the main entry for all such examples as the father's name, John, thus making it 'John, Hugh son of', and so on for all other children whose father's name happened to be John, with 'Hugh' or the other names simply cross-referenced back to 'John'. (On Welsh names he advises differently, for reasons he advances; p. 71.) But surely the important element in the name is 'Hugh', not the father's name; it is Hugh who is the active constituent of the reference in the record, and his father's name is only there for identification's sake, the later surname, perhaps Johnson, not yet having been adopted. Indeed, 'John' in such circumstances has no really active life at all, and Hugh's contemporaries would know him definitively as Hugh, whatever his father's name was. I doubt if, in indexing such names, most indexers would even include 'John' separately, unless the said John figured somewhere or somehow in his own right. And would not the researcher be in a like dilemma?

It happens that there was a small but quite important Jewish community in England in medieval times, and Dr. Hunnisett draws attention very briefly to parallel name usages among Jews, Arabs, and orientals. Jews in Europe were among the latest communities to adopt surnames in the modern sense—often these were forced on them, some of a deliberately derisive nature, by inimical Governments, for identification, tax, or military call-up purposes—and to this day, for religious purposes, a Jew receives a Hebrew name invariably in the form of, say, 'Joseph ben Abraham', 'ben' meaning 'son [of]' (similarly in Arabic you might get 'Yussuf ibn Ibrahim', 'ibn' = Hebrew 'ben'), irrespective of his normal civil name. No one, nevertheless, would think of indexing Joseph under the principal name of Abraham. To do so would be tantamount to indexing Joshua of Jericho fame, whose full name was Joshua, son of Nun; as 'Nun, Joshua son of'.

(On 'ibn', may I add that I am aware of medieval Arabic and Jewish figures especially in the golden age of Moorish culture, e.g. Ibn Roshd—known better to us as Averroes—Ibn Sina, famous as Avicenna, and such Jewish poets and scholars in Moorish Spain as Ibn Ezra and Ibn Gabirol. All are normally indexed nowadays under Ibn.)

We are reminded that every form of the Scottish, or Irish, 'Mac', even without the 'a', should be

indexed in order as if spelt 'Mac', and that the apostrophe in the Irish O'Reilly, O'Connor, etc., should be ignored for alphabetical purposes, so that, as the author shows, the progression might go 'O'Malley . . . Ongar . . . Ordell . . . O'Reilly . . . Orton . . . O'Sullivan'. But the book has fallen into what I was very early taught to regard as a typographical trap over a frequent contracted form of 'Mac'. Reference is made (pp. 53 and 70) to 'names beginning 'M', 'Mc' and 'Mac', an illustrative list including "M'Quade". 'M' throws into relief the point I wish to make, for it looks at first sight as though the letter M is mistakenly quoted with a single inverted comma at the front and a double inverted comma behind (typographically these quotation marks are more descriptively and better known as 'open quotes' and 'end quotes'—only 'open quotes' are technically real inverted commas, as will be seen if the printed word is turned upside down, the 'end quotes' being also marks of elision or indications of the possessive, *not* commas). Therefore, in printing it is usually better to replace M' with M' (a real inverted comma, which looks like a tiny 'c') or M^c, with a superior 'c'. Incidentally, Dr. Hunnisett is elsewhere quite dogmatic about quotes: 'Inverted commas,' he says (p. 126), 'should be used as sparingly as possible, and double inverted commas never'. He advances no particular reason for this, so one presumes it is simply a stylistic preference. After all, either a single or a double quote needs only one tap on a keyboard.

The treatment of identical names of different persons often puzzles indexers, but they will benefit by Dr. Hunnisett's comments on the relative merits of alphabetical and hierarchical order for homonyms; fortunately, many of the names are accompanied by details of title or rank or educational status or family relationship which makes the task easier.

General and subject indexes are also explored and reasons adduced—but not always, except to say that something is desirable or more useful, a subjective judgment—where the author suggests a departure from strict alphabetical order. One can agree with his refusal to merge into strict alphabetical order, for example, all the varied activities and products described under a main entry 'Crops', where the sequence runs, to shorten one of his own examples:

- Crops...
- barley...
- corn...
- destroyed by floods...
- eaten by cattle...
- oats...
- peas...
- sown in spring...
- etc.

and rewrite this more logically as

Crops...
destroyed by floods...
eaten by cattle...
sown in spring...
types of
barley...
corn...
oats...
peas...

But I do not think it is so helpful, as the author prefers, to transfer the 'types of' list, because it has its own modifications, to the end even after such

entries as (again to shorten the example)
eaten by cattle...
sown in spring...
unlawfully removed...
types of
barley...
etc.

'Types of', whether expanded by further indented modifications or subheadings or not, alphabetically comes before 'unlawfully removed'—it might very well be decided, on final editing, for space or economic reasons, to delete the individual names of crops, and 'types' would then willy-nilly have to be transposed to its true alphabetical place before 'u'. On the other hand, there are quite understandable reasons for the following exception concerning numbers or values in identical modifications (p. 89):

... The shortcomings of an alphabetical arrangement (column on the left) as compared with a numerical one (on the right) are illustrated in the following example

Juries, intimidation of, 79
of eight men, 24
of six men, 79
of thirty-six men, 8
of twelve men, 9, 26
of twenty men, 30
of twenty-eight men, 76
of twenty-four men, 6, 58

Juries, intimidation of, 79
of six men, 79
of eight men, 24
of twelve men, 9, 26
of twenty men, 30
of twenty-four men, 6, 58
of twenty-eight men, 76
of thirty-six men, 8

Nothing is gained by strict alphabetical order in such cases, and the numerical arrangement is obviously sensible . . .'

Many of the classical problems of indexers generally are touched on in this book besides those mentioned above: how to treat, for instance, 'de' and 'von' in proper names; prepositions; whether it is better to tabulate or use run-on paragraphs for modifications to main entries or for lists of people with the same surname; punctuation; typographical style, including the use of symbols or indentation (this, of course, is of more use to editors than to indexers, who are not too often consulted on this aspect), and so on.

And Dr. Hunnisett is on the side of those many indexers who believe it to be bad practice to have solid blocks of page numbers, unbroken by modifications, following particular entries. At the risk of a charge of philistinism, I do not wholeheartedly concur in this. If it is a question merely of aesthetics (which are important, of course, even in the layout of lists), then I believe aesthetics are really not the criterion in the appearance of an index. If it is a question of adequacy, one must remind indexers that very often stern economics—not necessarily pub-

lishers' parsimony—may dictate the amount and cost of space to be devoted to it. Nor can every person, place, or subject, however numerous the page numbers their mention may demand, be supplied with enough important sub-headings to justify separate treatment, yet the researcher needs every relevant page number that can be discovered. An index *can* look beautiful typographically, but it is essentially a working tool and one should not officiously strain to turn it into a master work of art visually. As Dr. Hunnisett observes in another connection, an index entry is 'not a potted biography', and page numbers, when all is said and done, are its *raison d'être*.

A 'Select Bibliography' completes the book and it is a compliment to the Society of Indexers that so many of the works thus recommended are by distinguished members of the Society. Future authors on indexing generally will do well to include Dr. Hunnisett's scholarly book in their bibliographies.

JOHN M. SHAFESLEY.

A manual of cataloguing practice, by K. G. B. Bakewell (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1970, xiii, 298pp. pl. illus. (International Series of Monographs in Library and Information Science, Vol. 14), £8.)

This book surveys the whole field of cataloguing and information retrieval, comparing the more important codes and their use; references are made to over 400 books and articles and practices in use in thirteen libraries of different kinds which the author has personally visited. This book is similar in some respects to 'state of the art' surveys but goes more deeply than most of these, leading the reader on to compare and think seriously about the important problems and practices which face librarians and documentalists in these days of rapid change in theory and practice. There are over 70 illustrations of equipment, examples of catalogue and index entries, etc.; these supplement excellently the clear descriptive text.

The chapter on information retrieval which describes and illustrates the techniques and many developments in this field will interest indexers who are concerned with the principles of book indexing which are being adopted and adapted in this age of rapid scientific application to speedier and non-manual information retrieval. After all, that is what indexing—even book indexing—really is.

But chapter 11 (filing and arrangement of catalogue entries) will probably interest most indexers for it deals with aspects of cataloguing which are identical in function and purpose to indexing. American and British codes of rules are compared and library practices referred to. When dealing with rules for filing Mr. Bakewell refers to BS 1749: 1969 . . . *Alphabetical arrangement* . . . but not to BS 3700: 1964 . . . *Preparation of indexes* . . . several of the paragraphs of which are not less germane to his study than those of BS 1749. The sections on the choice of subject headings are worthy of study by indexers who are concerned with non-alphabetical arrangement of subject headings.

There are two minor errors on p. 161. *Chambers' encyclopaedia* should have an additional 's' after the apostrophe, and *Librarian's glossary* should have the apostrophe after, not before, the 's'.

The index is competently compiled as one would expect from the compiler of the index to Volume 6 of *The Indexer*. It has a useful note at the head as a guide to the user.

This book will be essential reading for all concerned with cataloguing and information retrieval. Indexers will do well to consult it.

L.M.H.

The Bowker annual of library and book trade information, 1971. New York and London: R. R. Bowker. [xiv], 612, 8pp.

This compilation of statistics and articles is naturally concerned mainly with North America but it also deals with developments in these fields of an international character and also in a few foreign countries. It is a much enlarged publication compared with previous editions, and twenty-one articles as well as a new six-year cumulative index appear for the first time. Janice Johnson is the Managing Editor and Frank L. Schick the Consulting Editor. Sponsored by The Council of National Library Associations, it is an essential reference book for anyone concerned with the American library situation or book trade.

Something of the kind is urgently needed for the United Kingdom.

L.M.H.



Good bibliographic practice. A series of four papers reprinted from the *Philatelic Literature Review*, by James Negus. American Philatelic Research Library, 1971, 60pp., \$1.50.

The papers reprinted in this booklet are titled Guidelines for the amateur editor; Compiling literature lists and bibliographies; Contents lists and indexes; and Sources of philatelic information. To these are added a Postscript containing comments received while the original articles were appearing, and an index which, however, is not exhaustive, and does not contain entries for the contents of the Postscript. Some of these are quite important supplements to information contained in the text.

Obviously this is of particular significance to philatelists, and contains a wealth of information for amateurs and professionals, but it is of interest to anybody engaged in editing, indexing or bibliographical research. Replete with common sense, and obviously written by a widely experienced enthusiast, it presents concisely and in an interesting manner, facts that will prove invaluable to the beginner. It should also be read by the experienced who did not previously have the benefit of such guidance, but it is preferable to start off on the right foot, and the tyro would do well to make this booklet his basic guide in the pursuit of a hobby which has a world-wide following.

J.L.T.