British Museum Subject Index, especially now that the BNB has been absorbed into the British Library as the Bibliographic Services Division. Its future looks rosy indeed, but we do need to know more about the reactions of users to the system: so often they are ignored while we indexers happily experiment!

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Derek Austin and Jeremy Digger for advice given during the preparation of this article.

References.

5. Personal communication from Derek Austin and Christine Shaw.

Some 19th Century Indexes

When I read Mary Kendall’s article on 19th-century book indexes I looked at one or two old books I have but, alas, only one of them has an index at all, but this one surprised me by the fact that the index is so modern in style. The book is Ancient Mysteries Described especially the English Miracle Plays, by William Hone, 1823. The index is presumably by the author and I wonder whether he was a publisher, as it is printed for William Hone, 45 Ludgate Hill, London.

I have looked through the index carefully and find no “lack of specifness in choice of entry words”, to quote Mary Kendall. The entries are run-on where suitable, with semi-colons between subheadings as in modern indexes and no stop at the end.

There are never more than two undifferentiated page entries, comparing favourably with the modern example I append.

The few see entries are as now, e.g.,

Joachim see Ann and Joachim
Owlglass see Howleglas

(incidentally, in the text he is Howleglas [Ulen-Spiegle])

It is interesting that proper names are entered in strictly alphabetical order and not hierarchically as now,

Mary I. revives the Boy Bishop
Mary St., at Hill
—, Offery (Overy)
—, Virgin, her education

Some of the entries intrigued me, so I looked them up and was surprised to find that “Cruickshank, Mr. George, his talents as an artist” referred to the illustrator of the book, although his name does not appear on the title-page. The author says, “Corineus and Gogmagog . . . they are drawn by Mr George Cruickshank whose extraordinary talents have been exercised on my more original fancies . . . I cannot but express my astonishment that a pencil which commands the admiration of every individual qualified to appreciate art, should be so disregarded . . .” I thought he was much later.

Whifflers, to my surprise, come from whiffle, a small flute, whereas I had thought this to be one of Lewis Carroll’s inventions.

The following entry, “Press, the, its effect in promoting the Reformation. Preached against,” has a very modern sound, especially as the relevant passage cites the Tatler of May 14th 1709 and the Spectator of March 16th 1711. Could one substitute Referendum now?

Following Mary Kendall’s example, I cite from a history book published 1956, reprinted 1967, paperback 1972:

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