EXPLOITING INDEXES


'(Fussell) criticizes Duff Cooper's "immense" biography of Haig because Graves, Blunden and Sassoon are not mentioned in the index. Military historians may well quail and examine their own consciences and indexes to see where they have failed to mention men of letters involved at humble levels in all the wars they have described.

'Mr. Fussell describes very well the experience with which this cultural inheritance had to come to terms: the nature of trench warfare (though he exaggerates the duration and intensity of this: Cyril Falls's indispensable analysis, War Books, which emphasizes the amount of time spent in rest and training, does not appear in his index) . . .'


'She adored Racine, and seldom mentioned Shakespeare (his name does not occur in Professor Lewis's index).'

IN THE PRESS

In the New Scientist of 28 August, 1975, was a short article written under the pseudonym AC which dealt with incompetent indexes. It was based on three reviews published in seven months in the New Scientist which criticised the poor indexes in the books concerned, querying the causes.

The writer hoped that publishers would submit letters following his article, but none were published, although a few others were, in following weeks.

This article emphasized the growing awareness of reviewers of the inadequacies of many book indexes and expresses the concern that many members feel. It is a matter which must be constantly in the thoughts of members of the Society of Indexers and also of readers who use books with the object of finding information contained, or thought to be contained, in them.

It is with a view to making publishers, periodical editors, authors and book reviewers aware of the need for better indexes that extracts from reviews are reprinted in The Indexer.

Book Reviews


This is a direct translation of much of the material that appears in the original great work by Werner Stein, Kulturfahrplan, which has over the years sold millions of copies. It has been published in English for the first time and has been updated to 1974.

Brief entries are arranged by year from 500 A.D. and by longer periods right back to 5000 B.C. All the entries are sub-arranged: history, politics; literature, theater; religion, philosophy, learning; visual arts; music; science, technology, growth; daily life.

It is a very useful quick-reference book.

International Computer Language

The current edition of BS 3527 Glossary of terms used in automatic data processing, first issued in 1962, is now undergoing revision in accordance with terms agreed within the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). International agreement in this field is of vital importance as the number of computer-using nations increases and the variety of terms and inevitable inconsistencies of definitions grow.

The first four parts of the revision are as follows:—Part 1 Fundamental terms; Part 4 Organization of Data; Part 5 Representation of data; Part 6 Preparation and handling of data.

This extremely useful publication which is again sponsored by the (American) Council of National Library Associations still has Frank L. Schick as Consulting Editor but has new editor-compilers — Madeline Miele and Sarah Prakken.


Within these parts some chapters have been dropped but others added. In Part 6 there are variations in subject coverage each year; in the 19th edition there was a once-and-for-all chapter on the library service in Bulgaria. In this edition there are chapters on library planning (of services—not buildings) in Britain by H. T. Hookway, Chief Executive of the British Library Board; in the Soviet Union by N. M. Sikorsky, Director of the Lenin State Library; and in Jamaica by Joyce L. Robinson.

Library and book trade statistics, both American and international, are featured and brought up to date.

This is an excellent factual account of recent developments and of the current situation in the extensive and ever-changing field of libraries and the book trade. Inevitably the emphasis is American, but outstanding developments in these two fields in other countries are not ignored.

L.M.H.

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The AMERICAN SOCIETY OF INDEXERS

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Applications for membership should be sent to the Executive Secretary at the above address. Applications for individual membership should be accompanied by a check or money order for $15.00; applications for institutional membership by a check or money order for $100.00.