

# Correspondence

The Editor,  
*The Indexer.*

Sir,

Stephen Koss, reviewing John Marlowe's *Milner; apostle of Empire* in the *Times Literary Supplement* of 9th July, complained of the number of occasions on which his author had identified his characters simply as 'Mr' without any initials or forenames "even in the index".

I had the same grievance when indexing very recently as a labour of love a history of my old school. Some of the missing forenames I was able to supply from independent sources, as the author himself could have done.

Nothing, to my mind, looks more incomplete and untidy in an index than an entry consisting solely of a surname with the prefix 'Mr'.

I am reminded of Dr Johnson's angry outburst, as related by Boswell, when a certain Mr Flaxman was mentioned in his company:

"Let me hear no more of him, Sir. That is the fellow who made the index to my *Ramblers*, and set down the name of Milton thus: Milton, Mr John."

Yours obediently,  
G. Norman Knight.

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be employed. Attention should also be drawn to the 1969 A.N.U. publication by H. J. Gibbney and N. Burns, *A Biographer's Index of Parliamentary Returns from N.S.W., Queensland and Victoria, 1850-1889*. Another tool for historical research, Kathleen Thomson's and Geoffrey Serle's *Biographical Register of the Victorian Legislature 1851-1900* (Canberra, A.N.U., 1972) is of constant use to us and forms part of a planned series dealing with biographical registers of State Members of Parliament.

There is not time at this stage to discuss indexes in books, but a well-constructed index is the greatest boon in providing a prompt and accurate information service for Members of Parliament.

# British Standard on Copy Preparation

Some of the larger publishing houses, and many printing firms, have issued books or booklets with such titles as House Rules, Guide for Authors, House Style, Standards for Authors and Printers, Notes for Authors. The publications have a common purpose, but on numerous matters they are inevitably individualistic and therefore inconsistent; the smaller ones are usually distributed free to potential authors or customers, and the necessary limits of cost may result in the omission of useful material. Each printer probably deals with several publishers or other customers, and each publisher with several printers. Authors and typists may have different and more-varying standards and practices. All these variations make for expensive copy preparation and printers' correction costs.

A reasonable uniformity of style would make for efficiency, accuracy and lower costs. In this, as in other matters of printing practice, rationalization is highly desirable. With this object in mind, the British Standards Institution is preparing BS 5261 *Guide to copy preparation and proof correction*. Part 1: *Recommendations for preparation of typescript copy for printing* was published in 1975.

It is designed to help authors and typists to produce a typescript that will be easy for the printer to understand, and so avoids editorial preparation between the typing and typesetting stages, and eliminates proof correction due to inadequately prepared copy.

The new standard gives advice about matters such as page size, margins and spacing which are of immediate concern to any typist. It explains how headings and footnotes should be arranged, how pages should be numbered and how characters and symbols which cannot be produced by ordinary typewriter should be indicated clearly so that they will be set correctly by the printer.

Advice is also given about the proper use of roman and italic type, hyphens, headings, punctuation, quotation marks and abbreviations.

The compilation of bibliographies and reference lists, and the labelling and presentation of illustrations are also the subject of recommendations.

A short section, consisting of twelve paragraphs, is devoted to indexing. This states that indexes should be prepared in accordance with BS 3700 *Preparation of indexes*, which it follows closely. It does, however, state that in headings, subheadings, etc., initial capital letters shall be used only for proper names and lower case for all other entries; BS 3700 makes no recommendation on this matter.

There are two appendices; the first deals with en rules and em rules, and the second with the use of small capitals.

Other British Standards are referred to as and where appropriate.

Part 2 of this Standard, *Specification for typographic requirements, marks for copy preparation and proof correction, proofing procedure* was published in 1976. The text is very brief, most of the publication consisting of a table setting out the marks to be used in proof correction; this is followed by a marked galley proof of text and the revised galley proof incorporating the required corrections.

This Standard replaces BS 1219:1958. As far as possible, the familiar signs have been retained but all marginal instructions consisting of words, abbreviations and contractions such as 'caps', 'ital', 'w.f.', 'trs.' have been replaced by signs as this kind of mark as application in only one language.

A revision of Part 2 of BS 1219:1958 *Preparation of mathematical copy and correction of proofs* will be issued in due course as Part 3 of this Standard; it will also, for the first time, deal with chemical copy and proofs, including chemical formulae.

Copies of Parts 1 and 2 of BS 5261 are available from the BSI Sales Department, 101 Pentonville Road, London N1 9ND, price £4.00 each including postage.

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'It is no use turning over a new leaf. All you will find is the index.' This is the latest epigram from Sir Hugh Casson, President of the Royal Academy, uttered at the 150th birthday party of the London Zoo.

Sir Hugh forgot that it may be the index that is being sought.

G.N.K.

## Indexes of German-language biomedical abstracting journals—a new production method

In the Federal Republic of Germany there appear numerous abstracting journals in medical science. Among them in particular are eighteen sections of a documentation system in Heidelberg which—since 1912—provide information about progress in all branches of medicine (except dentistry and veterinary medicine), biochemistry, and biology: namely, Springer-Verlag's *Berichte* and *Zentralblätter*. These periodicals are also made usable by means of conjoint indexes. From 1976 index production is being carried out with electronic data processing—a unique event in medical documentation of this extent in the German-language sphere.

Medical specialists (indexers) assign the individual abstracts with specific terms (descriptors) which then are put in by data typists together with abstract numbers and author names in the form of 'word chains' on line in a computer system (INFOREX 1301) with integrated magnetic plate, time-sharing modus, and a tape unit which may be connected to up to eight screen terminals. Should corrections be necessary, these are done by searching the chains via single addressing.

The magnetic tapes are processed further in a computing centre specialising in non-numeric data processing (Rechenzentrum Buchhandel in Frankfurt) including separation into author and subject indexes, arrangement of individual descriptors so that every important term is at the beginning of the chain, alphabetisation of all original word chains and newly formed chains, input and processing of a printing program, and output of magnetic tapes.

These magnetic tapes—with data and the printing program—control a photocomposition system (HARRIS-INTERTYPE FOTOTRONIC 4002 of the Graphischer Betrieb Tritsch in Würzburg) for production of film for photo-offset processing.

This procedure saves time-consuming manual sorting, makes possible a certain standardisation of (German-language) medical nomenclature, and opens up better possibilities for searching in the medical literature.

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