

on the same two-page spread as the information to which they relate. This is a short index of 85 entries, but even so it is a help for child users to have a space left between letters of the alphabet.

### *The compilers*

Since I did not have to search any book for longer than five minutes before I found some defect, I am forced to conclude that most indexes to children's books are carelessly compiled. It has become fashionable for books designed for use in schools to have indexes, and so indexes are provided. But it does not seem to me that much supervision is exercised over the standard of the indexes. I wrote in my earlier article, 'Many people think that expert knowledge of a subject is not necessary when writing a book for children. The evidence for this belief lies in the number of series in which books on widely differing subjects are written by the same author.' This statement is probably no longer valid. Most books in the newer series have individual authors, and many are excellent books in their own right. The trend is for books to be written by subject specialists, far more so than was the case in 1973, but the authorship of the indexes remains anonymous, and it is probably as well that this should be the case. I suspect that many of the compilers have no training in indexing, or much knowledge of the subject matter of the books they index. The Society of Indexers in Britain has now celebrated its twenty-first birthday with an international conference held in the summer of 1978. There is an Australian offshoot, the Australian Society of Indexers, and there is also a considerable amount of literature published on the subject. It is to be hoped that this will lead to some improvement in the indexing of children's books as well as those for adults.

### *The ideal*

In conclusion I should like to list those characteristics which in my opinion contribute to a satisfactory index in a children's book. The first necessity is that the indexer should have a knowledge both of the subject matter of the book, and of the age-group for whom the book is designed, in order that the index may provide a key to the information in the book which the intended reader is able to use. The index should not replace the table of contents, and topics listed in the latter should certainly be listed also in the index. The terms used in the index should be those which the reader might be expected to know, and under which he might be expected to

look for information. There should not be numerous page references under a single entry, some of which lead only to a passing mention of the topic. The page reference in an index should always refer to a page which bears that number. In other words all pages should be numbered. Cross-references should be used sparingly. It often takes no more space to index a topic under two headings. Sub-headings should be used carefully and sparingly, but can be very useful. They should always be set out so that each new sub-heading has a new line. If bold or italic type is used to particularize entries this should be explained. Illustrations should also be indexed. The type used in any index should not be significantly smaller than that used for the main text. Subjects should be indexed under general as well as specific headings.

### *Conclusion*

I cannot stress too strongly that for many children using an index is a laborious task, and the index should therefore be made both as simple, and yet as comprehensive as possible. It is daunting, even for a literate adult, to be faced with a large number of page references under a single heading, and many children will give up at this stage. If they cannot find the information they need because the index is inaccurate, or because vital topics do not appear in it, they will give up using indexes. As I wrote in 1973, 'They have a right to expect that the indexes they consult should be accurate, comprehensive and simple.' Unfortunately I can find no evidence that this state of affairs is any closer now than it was then.

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### **The pursuit of knowledge**

The hero of *Tom's midnight garden*, by Philippa Pearce (OUP, 1958; Puffin, 1976) had better luck than his contemporaries in Australia. His problem was to find out when Hatty and the other strange visitors to his garden had lived. Their 'old-fashioned' clothes were his only clue:

He thought he knew where he could find information. He had often noticed on his aunt's kitchen shelf, together with Mrs Beeton's and all the other cookery books, a volume invitingly called *Enquire Within Upon Everything*. Now, when his aunt was out shopping, he slipped out of bed and borrowed it.

He looked in the Index for CLOTHING—Styles of Clothing in the Past. There was nothing under STYLES, or under PAST. Under CLOTHES there were subheadings that Tom would certainly have found interesting at any other time—Loose Warmer than Tight, and Rendering Fireproof; but there was nothing about the changing fashions of history. He felt dispirited, as though he had been invited to call, and promised a feast, and then, when he had knocked at the door, found no one *Within*. . . .

Tom returned *Enquire Within*, and, on the next occasion of his being left alone in the flat, prowled round looking for any other book of useful information. In his uncle's and aunt's bedroom he had a find: a complete set of volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in their own special glass-fronted bookcase.

Tom looked up CLOTHING, and that asked him to 'See COSTUME,' which he did. There were many pages in double columns of small print, whose

appearance somehow discouraged him. He preferred to look at the pictures. . . .

He noticed an oddity in the earlier illustrations. The men wore various kinds of leg coverings, but never trousers: the first pair of trousers to be represented was worn by a French Man of Fashion in the Early Victorian Period. Tom did at least know that the men and boys in his garden had all worn trousers. . . .

Hot on the scent now, Tom turned to the volume TON to VES of the *Encyclopaedia* and looked up TROUSERS. There were no illustrations, but the written account was short. . . .

Tom now felt he had enough information to arrange into an argument. 'Hatty lived when men wore trousers, so she can't have lived earlier than the nineteenth century, when trousers came into fashion. Very well!'

\*Quoted from chapter 14, *Tom's midnight garden*, by permission of the Oxford University Press.

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## Indexing Pepys' Diary\*

Robert C. Latham and Rosalind Latham

*Robert Latham is the Pepys Librarian at Magdalene College, Cambridge*

Over the past 20 years Mr Latham has edited (jointly with the late Professor William Matthews) a nine-volume edition of *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* published by Bell (Vols. 1-9, 1970-76 £8.50); [an edition described by Bernard Levin as 'the absolutely complete and unimprovably definitive edition . . . so exceptional that it can be said to have set new standards of scholarship'†—Ed.] Together with his wife, Mr Latham has now completed the index to the series; a full volume itself, which made about 900 pages of typescript.

### *Word games and indexing*

Mr Latham spoke to The Society of issues of indexing policy involved rather than technique. A work of such dimensions might have proved an intolerable indexing labour done alone; but as a joint enterprise with his wife's energy and powers of organization, and with a text so entertaining, the work in fact often spilled over into hilarity, becoming a game rather than a job. Indeed in-

dexing itself may be seen as a word game, seeking the appropriate word for comprehensive headings or verbal formulas for a whole series of related subjects; Mrs Latham's expertise in word games accounted for many of their solutions found.

### *Subject headings*

Earlier large indexes examined included the one-volume index to Pepys' Diary prepared by H. B. Wheatley (Bell, 1899). This they found very helpful and accurate but deficient in subject headings. References for a single subject are not there gathered together under one entry; it has for instance only two lines under 'Dress', the rest being entered under the various items of clothing; and nothing at all for the Navy Board, the office in which Pepys worked during the diary period. Great admiration was expressed for Esmond de Beer's superb index to the diary of John Evelyn (Oxford, 1955), with praise for its subtle refinements and almost inhuman accuracy.

The aim in compiling the new index to Pepys was to make the material available to the amateur as well as the historian. Historical information is

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\* Report of the address given to The Society on 9 October 1979.

† *The Times* 1 June 1976.