Indexing the *Strand magazine*

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Traces the history of the 'Strand magazine'; how the index was compiled; special problems of the Author, Illustrator, and Subject indexes; the need for a master index to magazines, and the benefits to be derived from this.

History of the 'Strand magazine'

The *Strand magazine* was begun in 1891 by George Newnes, whose first publishing venture was the enormously successful *Tit-bits*, started in 1881. (It has now celebrated its centenary and is still thriving.) From the profits Newnes was able to fund a new magazine, and Herbert Greenough Smith, then working on *Temple Bar*, an old-established publication, had the idea and became the first editor of the *Strand*.

Newnes was greatly influenced by such glossy American imports as *Harpers* and *Scribners*. He wanted a popular magazine with good stories, plenty of pictures—possible only through the improved technology of the 1890s—and no serials. He did not think the public would like to wait a month between serial parts; strangely, for the tradition of serializing books was strong: Dickens, Trollope, Hardy, Henry James, Wilkie Collins and many others had their works serialized in such magazines as *The Cornhill* and *Household words*. Popular magazines, though, were in decline by the 1890s. Dickens had died in 1870 and there was an apparent dearth of good authors. The *Strand* thus began at a critical period in English literature. It became known for its excellent portraits and interviews—some 600 alone in the two series, 'Portraits of Celebrities at Different Times in Their Lives' and 'Illustrated Interviews'; for its proportion of illustration to text—'a picture on every page' was the norm and of course its writers. Greenough Smith was an excellent editor, knowing exactly what the public wanted. He 'discovered' Conan Doyle, W. W. Jacobs and many other talented writers, and remained editor of the *Strand* until 1930. The *Strand* also had its own art editor, W. H. J. Boot; a new post, for previously the artwork had been the responsibility of the editor.

It is not true that the magazine became known for its detective fiction or its science fiction, as recent reviews would have one believe. It also published work by D. H.

Lawrence, Evelyn Waugh, Churchill, Maugham, Steinbeck, and many more. It encouraged humorous stories and articles—there are some 200 by Wodehouse alone, many of which were published only in the *Strand*. There were also children's stories—Kipling's *Puck of Pook's Hill*, several serials by E. Nesbit, and many foreign translations. There is also a quantity of romantic fiction by Ethel M. Dell and H. de Vere Stacpoole (whose sequel to *The blue lagoon* was hailed as 'the Literary Event of 1923'). There are, too, many factual articles covering everything, from early cinema to the electron microscope; new theories of the moon to cows milked by ants.

In 1930 Conan Doyle died and Greenough Smith retired, but remained active on the Board until his death in 1935. From then on changes become apparent. There is more non-fiction, chiefly politics. In 1935 Churchill wrote an article entitled 'The Truth About Hitler' which so incensed the German Embassy in London that the *Strand* was thenceforth banned from Germany.

The Second World War found the magazine in a precarious position. None of its rivals had survived, but because of its solid background and loyal readership, it carried on. In October 1941 the size of the *Strand* was reduced, and remained so until the end. After the War, it managed a brief revival, if only a prolonged swan song, when artists such as Michael Ayrton, Mervyn Peake, Cecil Beaton, Ardizzone, Ronald Searle and last and by no means least, Robin Jacques, contributed their talents. The last-mentioned is a highly talented artist, who in the autumn of 1948 was appointed art editor. The magazine ceased production in March 1950; when the BBC announced the demise of what had become a national institution, the newsreader wore a black armband which was copied by many the next day. As Wodehouse said to his friend W. Townend: '. . . I drop a silent tear, but I can't say I'm much surprised, for anything sicker looking than the little midget it had shrunk to I never saw.'

Format of the index

The Index* is a title index, but also provides extra information such as who authors were, whether there is

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a recognized main character in a story, and whether the story is part of a serial. This led to quite a few problems of both time and space. The time allotted to complete the manuscript was six months (although this was later extended). The layout was determined through trial and error.

The Index is in three sections, with nine appendices. Some hold that an index should be one and indivisible; for a back-of-book index, especially a small one, that is probably best. For an index to a run of magazines it is easier and more sensible to split the information into authors, illustrators and subjects. One can then go immediately to the section wanted, particularly as each section is almost a book in itself.

The Author Index

Problems solved in the Author Index helped solve problems elsewhere. The original conception of the index was simple in the extreme: chronological listing of titles under alphabetically listed authors.

Here a short digression is needed. A story is a story is a story? Well, not quite. There may be four different ways of presenting a story.

1. A novel. One begins at p.1 and reads through to the end. You cannot start in the middle for sense would be lost.

2. The connected serial, where each story or episode may be read on its own. It makes sense, and one does not have to continue reading the whole sequence in order. Nevertheless, it is more sensible to start at episode one and go through to the end, for there is a linking theme; e.g. 'goodies chasing baddies'. Although each episode is complete in itself, there are referrals to past escapades, and occasionally two chapters cover one dastardly act. In the end, of course, the villain is always caught. It is therefore better to read from chapter one on to the end.

3. The connected short story. Similarly, has linking character/s, but here each story is quite different. The best examples are the Sherlock Holmes stories where each story is complete in itself but is usually placed under general headings such as 'The Return of Sherlock Holmes'.

4. The short story, or collection of short stories. Each is distinct. There is no linking theme or character, and the order in which they might be read does not matter.

All these types of stories appear in the *Strand*. There was some controversy as to who had 'invented' the connected short story: Conan Doyle in his 'Memories and Adventures' published in the *Strand* in 1923/24 said that he believed that 'he was the first to realize this and the *Strand Magazine* the first to put it into practice', whereas E. Phillips Oppenheim claimed it was his idea, in his autobiography written in 1941.

Now to return to chronological listing. The problem arose that some authors and illustrators were extremely prolific, and would contribute two series simultaneously, with perhaps also an article or story or even a contribution to a symposium within the same issue. The need for a chronological listing was so that each series could be listed together, not dispersed. One might see at a glance, for instance, all those stories under the general heading, 'Return of Sherlock Holmes'. One might also see the order in which stories appeared—particularly useful to collectors. Clearly, though, with this strict chronological order, some stories and articles would not appear under their general headings: series would be broken. Consistency in everything was stressed. If series could not be held together there was no point in continuing to list items in date order. The alternative was to alphabetize everything. But then, unless one was careful, a series might be lost forever with no clue as to whether it was a connected serial, connected short story, whether the stories should be read in order of appearance and whether there was a main character: all the information a user would find most useful. A simple solution was found; in parenthesis, beside the title entry and where necessary, appear groups of letters and numbers. For example, 'The Magic City' by E. Nesbit is a children's story, serialized with no chapter headings. Its entry reads:

The Magic City (CS) (Jan 1910 39: 108–115)
                        (Feb 1910 39: 237–244)
and so on.

'The Psammead; or, The Gifts' is a connected serial. A children's story, it concerns four main characters— Anthea, Cyril, Jane and Robert; each episode has a chapter title and is generally separate from its neighbour. There are referrals back and occasionally an adventure will cover two chapters. It should be read from chapter one to the end. An entry for this appears as:

Being Wanted (ACJR, CS. PG.3) (Jun 1902 23: 699–707)

Although this does not provide at a glance the whereabouts of chapter one, this is easily discovered; in the main brackets you see that chapter three appeared in June. It is a simple calculation that chapter one must have been in April, two months previously.

The key to the initials used appears immediately under the name of the Author, Illustrator or Subject.

Main characters are those the author used in more than one book or story, not necessarily in the *Strand*: e.g., Poirot, Bulldog Drummond, Sherlock Holmes, and the myriad Wodehousian characters such as Jeeves, and Ukridge. They are acknowledged whenever possible, which gives an added piece of information for readers and collectors.

Having overcome the problem of 'losing' serials and

people, the next task was an alphabetization system to deal with some five to six thousand contributors as well as subject headings. Each contributor wrote anything from one to 250 separate stories or articles. Those who wrote 30 or more items were allotted an A4 sheet of paper, or two, or five; but a large number only contributed one item each, so rather than work with papers of varying sizes, or a combination of cards in a shoebox and A4 sheets, I listed six to eight people on each sheet; an unorthodox method, I admit.

Initially, the indexing was done chronologically, as it was simpler to check one volume through than to follow one contributor through several volumes. Firstly, each person was numbered alphabetically, and lists typed in order, putting in *see/see also* references to real names and pseudonyms where known. Originally, it was intended to index the form of name by which a person presented himself in the *Strand*; for instance, E. Nesbit, Mrs Hubert Bland and E. Bland, with connecting references to show that all were the same person. But this proved not quite clear enough to show who the person was, which was her real name (if any), or what the initial stood for. I had to write Edith, and not Edith but E(dith), for that is how she signed herself in the *Strand*. Having taken everyone's identity for granted, I now had to find out who they all were. The ladies proved particularly infuriating. As well as pseudonyms they had maiden names or married names. The passing of time was a constant problem, for not only had I to find out who everybody was, but also what their initials stood for, whether they had any hidden middle names, when they were born and when they died. (Not all reference books agreed either on dates or the spelling of names.)

Sadly, many contributors well-known in their day died forgotten. Illustrators particularly; there are several entries where 'flourishing' dates have been put in—sometimes spanning 30 or 40 years—because their deaths or births went unrecorded. Many people were shy of revealing their true ages. It was not a simple matter of going for information to the *Dictionary of national biography, Who's who* and the many other excellent sources. The research was extremely time consuming and on occasion quite frustrating. It took almost as long to identify people and discover their dates as it did to index them, and as a consequence many entries are unfortunately not complete.

It may seem to reviewers that names familiar to them, should also have been familiar to the compiler; that I should have known, for instance, that Robert Eustace was really Robert Eustace Barton. Some information on names is still coming in, and indeed welcomed. Those discovered in time were included, but a difficulty in adding, say, Mrs Youngman Carter (Margery Allingham) was that I typed the Index on sensitive Camera Ready Paper. There was no typesetting. If a name was found to be in the wrong place, I could not type a page

and then cut and stick correctly. Ethel M. Dell, for instance, should have had her entries under Savage, which I learned too late was her married name, not her maiden name.

When the typed list of authors was all in order with all the known *see/see also* references inserted, the task of alphabetizing their entries arose. Those who had no more than an A4 page of entries were relatively easy to alphabetize, then it grew complicated. Series and main characters with their attendant initials and numbers had to be inserted as necessary. Although no master list of initials was provided, I did take care not to duplicate the same sequence of initials. For instance, 'Portraits of Celebrities' and 'Private Collector' could have had the same initials, PC. But POC was used for the first and PC for the second, to provide an easy reference and avoid confusion particularly in the 'Illustrator Index', when an artist was likely to have worked for many people and many series, and to have used the same initials would have been nonsensical.

For large numbers of entries, my husband divided an A3 sheet of paper into unequal-sized squares with a letter or letters of the alphabet in each, according to their frequency of use. Each chronological entry was then numbered and, with the first word or letters, placed in the appropriate box. Entries in each box were numbered alphabetically on the right-hand side, generally in a different colour. These second numbers were transferred back to the chronological sheet of entries. Each entry then had two numbers. This gave an excellent check on whether every entry was numbered and alphabetized correctly, and proved invaluable, at the typing stage, particularly for people such as Conan Doyle and Wodehouse, who contributed hundreds of stories and articles covering some two dozen series and main characters.

As a novice indexer, I encountered many common indexing problems. Macs proved particularly letter-blinding—M'Giffin ending up after the Me's. Mr and Mrs and numbers I also found initially confusing. I chose word-by-word, not letter-by-letter, but perhaps adhered to this too rigidly, so that, for instance, the entries for MEADE, L. T. and Robert EUSTACE, and MEADE, L. T. and Clifford HALIFAX were reversed, Clifford coming before Robert. Cross-referencing between real names, pseudonyms and assumed names did quite often cause me mental blankness. Mrs L. T. Meade is a pseudonym. She was really Mrs Toulmin Smith and her forenames were Elizabeth Thomasina. I was loath to send the reader to Smith for her entries and then back again to Meade for her collaborations. Had I known that Robert Eustace was also a pseudonym I might well have abandoned the whole index! The thought of sending people from Barton to Jepson and Eustace (he also collaborated with a man called Edgar Jepson), and then on to Meade and Eustace; from Meade to Smith and back

again—not to mention references from Eustace to Barton—well, the mind boggles! It might be correct to do all this, but it does take up precious space and could cause annoyance to the user. Then, too, I was quite rightly pulled up for not being consistent. Agatha Christie should have been put under Mallowan, even if this was her second married name, but after all one can be too pedantic, and the potential user might jib at being shunted from one end of the alphabet to the other for the sake of a 'correct' index entry.

The Illustrator Index

The Illustrator index presented slightly different problems. There are many categories of illustrations; cartoons, wrapper designs, illustrations to stories, illustrations to stories written and illustrated by the same person and illustrations not attached to any story. Under each illustrator's entry, therefore, will be found a capital letter denoting the entry category; e.g. A = Alphabetical list by author of stories/articles for which the illustrator provided illustrations; B = chronologically listed cartoons—these were quite difficult to index, for some did not have captions and others did not necessarily explain the cartoon, and it was considered the compiler's job to tell the reader what the cartoon was all about.

The Illustrator index shows how *see/see also* references can be carried to their extreme. As there is no cross-referencing between each index, what appears in one index must appear in the others in the same way. An example of this appears under SOMERVILLE, E(dith) Œ(none):

Martin, Violet Florence *SEE* Somerville, E(dith) Œ(none) and Martin Ross (pseud.)
Ross, Martin (pseud. of Violet Florence Martin) *SEE* Somerville, E(dith) Œ(none) and Martin Ross
Somerville, E(dith) Œ(none) *SEE* Somerville, E(dith) Œ(none) and Martin Ross
Somerville, E(dith) Œ(none) and Martin Ross (pseud. of Violet Florence Martin): The Boat's Share (SFE1.2) (Jan 1905 29: 72–80).

In the Author index these entries are spaced out, for there are gaps between 'Martin', 'Ross' and 'Somerville', but in the Illustrator index bringing them all together does cause impatience.

Incidentally, the Author index was the 'Master', and each entry in both the Illustrator and Subject indexes was checked against the entry in the Author index.

The Subject index

The Subject index was the most difficult of them all: it was the last to be done and was intended originally to be only selective. However, to keep consistency, what appears in one index must appear in the others, where relevant. An article by Churchill could not appear only in the Author index; it had also to appear in the Subject index regardless of whether or not it seemed interesting.

I had to overcome many mental obstacles before I could start work on the Subject index. It took time to realize that a person might be a subject as well as a contributor, and a contributor not only in another part of the Index but also for himself as subject. I also had the idea that subjects should be grouped together under only a few choice headings. To begin with there were no more than a dozen or so headings, including an all-embracing 'miscellaneous'. It took a while to appreciate that there might be one heading with just one title entry. I then realized that I had no idea what headings would be appropriate. Initially, I went through the article and provisionally placed it under a heading which I thought applicable. This index grew, not because I wanted it to; it seemed to have a life of its own. Each article then had to be skimmed to check its position. Occasionally, where a title appeared not to fit the heading, a word (or words) were placed in parenthesis beside the title, in explanation.

Biographical articles were difficult, for people interviewed invariably knew or had anecdotes for a number of other well-known personages. There was not time to extract all the information I would have liked. In fact, I could probably have produced a subject index of the *Strand* of 800 pages.

By now the length of the Index was causing concern. Originally the probable total length was envisaged as 250–350 pages. It soon became evident that the Author index alone would take up this allocation, and there was no early way of knowing how long each of the other two indexes would be, even without the suggested appendices. I wondered whether the whole project might be abandoned—but fortunately it was not.

Because the Author and Illustrator indexes were now complete, the only possible one to save space in was the Subject index. This was achieved in a number of ways. Not all the potential information was extracted. Also the number of *see/see also* references was reduced. This, however, proved self-defeating. In an effort not to 'lose' precious articles I found myself *see-also*ing all sorts of things. People's names were rationalized. Originally, articles were placed under the title which a man acquired and which he died with. William Martin Conway became Lord Allington; his entries were placed under Allington with a *see* reference from Conway. In the Subject index there were many people who acquired titles or moved from being a Prince to a King, and entering them twice took up extra space. I decided to allot just one entry per person and place the articles under the person's name at birth. The entries for Lord Allington were placed under CONWAY, William Martin, Lord Allington, keeping the title. This was justified because in the *Strand*, Lord Allington wrote under his name of Conway, as indeed did several other titled people write under their own birth names.

Royalty were peculiarly difficult. There were so many of them and all seemed to be related to each other. I had no special knowledge of royal genealogies, and although I consulted reference books I am still not certain that everyone is in their rightful place. For instance, it took me a while to realize that Haakon VII King of Norway had started life as Prince Charles of Denmark. In the *Strand*, much knowledge is assumed.

I did insist on one innovation introduced into the Subject index, as memory is not always to be relied upon. In the *Strand* there are many people for whom there is a great deal of information. They can for the most part be grouped into various categories. Ten were chosen; e.g. clergy, politicians, artists, actors etc. Under these headings, which will be found in their alphabetical places, there are listed alphabetically all those people for whom there is some information. Each person so listed can also be found in his own right as a Subject heading. One may want to know, for example, not whether there is anything on 'Cary Grant' but what information there is on 'film stars'. One can then go to the list of 'film stars' and see at a glance who is there. This eliminates the need to remember elusive names.

Problems and time

I must stress that as a problem arose, it was not necessarily solved immediately. Quite often problems overlapped and lasted for many weeks. For example, when I was about two-thirds through compiling the index, the publisher wrote to check, 'you do know that page endings must be included'? Till then I had assumed that the page at which an article or story began was sufficient. It simply had not occurred to me that it could be useful to know how long an article was. Having been told, of course it was obvious. But it meant that my work so far was virtually useless. I had to go back through some 70 volumes checking each page to see where stories began and finished. In some of the smaller issues of the 1940s, it was not uncommon for a story to be started at the beginning and concluded at the end of the issue. For illustrators I had to be even more precise, noting only those pages on which a picture appeared and not including pages of text only.

Another problem extending over months concerned two missing volumes. When I began the Index, I had in my possession about 95 complete and some 21 incomplete volumes; two were missing entirely. (The full set is of 118 volumes, comprising 720 issues.) The British Library had copies of my incomplete volumes, but also lacked Volumes 77 and 80. I just had to hope that these would be discovered in time.

About mid-July (the manuscript was due at the end of September) a bookseller acquaintance telephoned to say that he had just sold a run of *Strands* up to and including volume 80. He was sending them off to the States, but if I wished I could index the two missing volumes within the next two days; so I did. All was still not well; this copy

of Volume 77 had six pages neatly taken out. There was no contents list, no way of knowing what was missing; I could only hope that it was an unimportant story.

But the missing pages proved to be a rare article on P. G. Wodehouse by his daughter, Leonora. This was not discovered until too late when the book was already being produced. I trust this is the only important omission from the index, and interested parties including the Wodehouse Society, have been notified of where the missing article appears.

The Appendices

Some appendices were the publisher's idea, some were the compiler's.

'Anonymous cartoons and anonymous stories/articles' are useful extractions, although the cartoons are not, strictly, 'anonymous'. Generally, they are included here because there was no signature or the signature was indecipherable.

The two series, 'Stories for Children' and 'Childrens' stories', I wanted to combine into one Appendix, with the initials SC or CS in parenthesis to indicate which series the stories came from. For some reason this was turned down. The Appendix listing 'Illustrated interviews' and 'Portraits of celebrities' was my idea, although these were originally placed in the Subject index. (Curiously, the articles referring to Sherlock Holmes, were originally an Appendix, but these were relegated to the Subject index.) These two series cover some 600 people so it is only right that they should have been extracted and combined into one easy reference point.

'Authors and their illustrators' is another of my own interests. The magazines at this time regularly commissioned good illustrators, and as a collector of illustrated books I find it interesting to see for which selected authors illustrators worked. Symposia presented special problems, and at first the whole thing was ignored. They appeared after all in the Subject index, but not necessarily in the Author index, as contributors were generally not authors, and quite often their contribution was just a one-liner. One problem was presentation, and the present form was chosen after much thought. It was the very last item to be dealt with, and saving time and space was of prime importance. There was no time to find out who everyone was, but *see* references were retained for pseudonyms where known.

Magazines as neglected treasure-houses

There are a number of reasons why I chose to compile this index. Certainly one was to gain access to the contents of my own almost complete collection of *Strands*! The following comments could equally apply to most of the popular magazines which flourished from 1890 to the Second World War; and even to *Lilliput, Men only* and

other small-format magazines begun in the 1930s—at least until 1960.

Nineteenth-century magazines are covered by the multi-volume *Wellesley index* prepared by the Toronto University. In fact, it is more of a contents listing than an index, for there is no gathering together of information. Its main value is that the names of many anonymous contributors are uncovered.

Twentieth-century popular magazines have not been touched: their contents have for the most part been forgotten. For collectors of modern authors and illustrators these magazines are a treasure-house. Too much is made of a first edition: what about the first appearance? For subjects, the magazines provide an untapped wealth of material. Picture researchers would do well to take a look at the *Strand*, for instance. Modern printing methods mean that original photographs do not have to be used, and there is the added bonus of totally original material in the *Strand*, plus a mass of biographical information. The magazines at the Illustrated London News library are well used—too well used, for they are in a poor state of repair. Alternative sources of information would be useful, and the *Strand* should be one of them. Biographers, too, should take note of these neglected sources. How often does a biography, even an autobiography, of a literary person mention the work of the author for the magazines? Yet it was the popular magazines that provided authors before the Second World War with their bread and butter. Bibliographies are improving, but without a master index it would take considerable time to go through every magazine of a period.

Exhibition organizers, radio producers, and many others would find the magazines an endless source of useful information. The National Portrait Gallery, for example, recently mounted an excellent exhibition on Harry Furniss. Information was gained from Furniss's own works and one article in the *Strand*. (The article was on display but was not attributed to the *Strand* but to 'George Newnes'.) If the Gallery had access to the *Strand Index* further information could have been gleaned, particularly on the film made by Furniss in 1914, a copy of which was actually projected.

A recent exhibition at the Boilerhouse on 'Taste', was accompanied by an interesting booklet of essays on aspects of Taste over the ages. Henry Cole was rightly mentioned, but Professor Pazaurek, a key figure in the Bad Taste movement, was omitted. There is an excellent article on him, with accompanying photographs, in the *Strand*, and Bevis Hillier quoted from it two years ago in a magazine article. What a lost opportunity!

There are many more examples of how a master index to magazines could help provide access to information relevant to today's collectors and researchers. I am now working on a master index to *Pall Mall magazine, Nash's* and *Nash's Pall Mall magazine*. But there are many more magazines to be done: the field is open.

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☐ To avoid unintentional duplication of such individually undertaken indexing, the Society of Indexers is prepared to keep a register of indexes in progress of those who write to tell us of their work in hand, and to answer enquiries as to whether specific publications are known to be being indexed.

Online information

The Seventh International Online Information Meeting was held in London in December 1983. It followed the familiar pattern of presentations, product reviews and discussions, complemented by an exhibition of information technology and electronic publishing displayed at nearly one hundred stands.

Among recent developments noted by your reporter were three online services run by the British Library. The Reference Division catalogue from 1976 is to be available through BLAISE-LINE early in 1984; the HELPIS file is already available, providing online information on films, videotapes, sound recordings, tape-slide programmes, slide sets and filmstrips prepared by the British Universities Film and Video Council; and a new file, SIGLE, covering 'grey' literature, that is documents issued informally and not available through normal book-selling channels, will become available some time in 1984. British documents cited in SIGLE will be obtainable through the Automatic Document Request Service (ADRS) of the Lending Division.

A new machine is also being developed at the British Library in co-operation with Optronics Ltd, of Cambridge, a book scanner and digitizer to convert the contents of books, without harm to the originals, into digital form for transmission to a remote location or to storage in a computer memory. (Work is proceeding on the perfecting of optical storage discs.)

In addition to their main checking and ordering file, Blackwell Technical Services have developed two independent systems, PERLINE and BOOKLINE, by means of which a local library can control ordering, claiming, circulation, binding, accounting and other management functions of serials and monographs. PERLINE, for example, can give an overdue display for serials, a claims file, and an overdue claims display. It can keep the fund accounting up to date.

OCLC also is offering libraries an individualized online system—LS/2000—for cataloguing and catalogue searching and for circulation control, with related