'The index to the definitive Pepys'*

Robert Latham

Robert Latham, then Pepys Librarian at Magdalene College, Cambridge, spoke to the Society of Indexers in October 1979 on his compilation of the index to the nine-volume edition of *The diary of Samuel Pepys* edited by himself and William Matthews (see *The Indexer* 12 (1) April 1980, 34-5). In 1983 the index was published as Vol. XI (Bell and Hyman, £19.50 per vol.), to the acclaim of all reviewers (see *The Indexer* 13 (4) Oct. 1983, 272-3, 275). In February 1984 Mr Latham gave the Dr Aldred Memorial Lecture to the Royal Society of Arts, on 'Pepys and his editors'; the full text appears in *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, May 1984, 390-400. We reproduce here the section concerning the compilation of the index, after its triumphant publication, by kind permission of the editor of *JRSA* (the title we give it is our own).

The eleventh and final volume of this edition is the Index, on which I worked for about four years, with my wife, poor wretch. This was my first attempt at a big index—I suspect nobody survives to do more than one anyway. They are a minor art-form and combine the pleasures of a jig-saw puzzle with those of a Victorian paper game. You play around with hundreds of page-references so that they fit into a design, and you have to find the appropriate word or words to summarize or 'indicate' the subject of the reference or references. I began by reading manuals on the subject—and then went on to read other people's indexes. Some, like Dr de Beer's index to his Evelyn, give you a model to follow, as does the rest of his work, though you know you will never do it half as well. Others are examples of how not to do it—especially if they consist of headings followed by lines of undifferentiated page-numbers. Others again can often be very revealing. Those who have, for instance, read and enjoyed the writings of Hugh Trevor-Roper, may have missed reading his indexes, where you will find sometimes even more to read and enjoy. He is free with his opinions in the books themselves, but here and there in the indexes he really lets fly. For example in his index to his book of essays *Renaissance, reformation and social change*, you will find his views on several subjects: on Saints ('Aquinas, St. Thomas: advantages of ignoring him'; 'Clement of Alexandria, a prurient saint'; 'Epiphanius, a scatological saint'); on Scotsmen ('Brodie of Brodie, Alexander: goggles at earthly delights of London'; 'Irvine of Drum, Sir Alexander: a sensible Scotsman'); and of course on his fellow historians ('Hill, Christopher: highly praised, p. 243; less highly, . . . p. 194').

I didn't achieve these effects in the index to Pepys, but I enjoyed doing it. It meant, for one thing, listening to the diary being read aloud to me. My wife read it while I, at the other side of the table, made notes (a rough draft of the notes having been made by a research assistant beforehand). I discovered—what I ought to have known before—that my ears read better than my eyes. We teach our eyes from early youth to read quickly, and therefore miss a lot. When we depend on our ears we drop to the pace of the spoken word—and catch details which have escaped our eyes. I found, for instance, that when my wife's voice told me (as she read) that Pepys's neighbour Sir Richard Ford, acting as a tax assessor, had put Pepys's rate rather higher than Pepys thought fair, I remembered her voice telling me a day or two before that Pepys had annoyed Sir Richard by condemning the hemp he had sold to the navy. Was Sir Richard getting his own back?

Two or three general points about the Index were obvious to me from the start; apart from the need, as I have already implied, to avoid mere page-numbers. One was that Pepys himself could hardly be the subject of an index entry: he had to be dealt with for the most part under a series of distinct headings—'Health', 'Diary', 'Clerk of the Acts', 'Books', 'Music' and so on—though in the end a small entry headed 'Pepys, Samuel' proved to be a useful container for references to his life before the diary period. Another general point was that London would best be treated similarly: with the streets and most of the buildings etc. dealt with under their own names, and the entry 'London' reserved for more general matters such as the corporation of the City.

For the rest, the Index covered persons, places and subjects—each entry, where appropriate, (and that was almost everywhere) being divided and subdivided into sections and sub-sections. As a result the entry on Parliament had 32 sections, and that on Charles II, 31. One of the principles of the design was to gather as many references as possible into clusters—under general terms such as 'Food', 'Drink', 'Dress' and so on—so that the Index could enable the diary to serve as a book of reference. Another aim was to reduce to a minimum the uninformative references—those that had to be described as 'allusions' or 'miscellaneous'. One means of achieving this aim was the use of the category 'social'—which I adopted from Dr de Beer's index to his Evelyn.

*Thus designated by Bernard Levin in 'Authors' attitudes to indexes', *The Indexer*, this issue.

COLLEGES: Christ’s: factions, 1/63-4 & n.; P visits, 2/135, 180; Jesus: 9/213; manorial court, 2/182; King’s: P walks in grounds, 1/68; visits chapel, 2/135-6 & n.; 3/224; 8/468; Magdalene: P visits, 1/67, 68; 9/212; remarks on ‘old preciseness’, 1/67; recalls undergraduate days, 1/67; 3/31, 54 & n. 1; 5/203, 361 & n. 1; 8/466, 468; 9/212; W. Penn, jun. to be entered for, 3/17 & n. 4, 21; gateposts, 8/469 & n. 1; buttery, 9/212; college beer, ib.; St John’s: P visits library, 3/224 & n. 1; 8/468; Trinity: P visits, 3/224; 8/468; celebration of Monmouth’s visit, 4/99; Trinity Hall: P entered at (1650), vol. i, p. xxi; visits, 2/146; 3/218; alluded to (in error): 8/133

CAMBRIDGESHIRE: parliamentary elections, 1/112 & n. 2; 8/85-6 & n.; Roger P’s estate, 4/159; P’s proposed purchase of land, 5/196; prestmone, 8/85 & n. 2

CAM(P)DEN, Lord: see Hickes

CANTERBURY, Kent: King visits, 1/161; P visits cathedral, 1/172; remains of Becket’s tomb, ib. & n. 3; list of archbishops in, 6/339 & n. 4; alluded to: 2/32; 4/25

CARACENA, Don Luis de Benavides, Marques de, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands 1658-64: unpopularity, 9/396 & n. 3; confessor, 9/396-7

CARCASSE: see Carcasse

CAREW, [John], regicide: executed, 1/266 & n. 1

CARISSIMI, Giacomo, composer: songs, 5/217 & n. 2; alluded to: 8/36

CARKESSE (Carcasse), [James], clerk in the Ticket Office:

CHARACTER: 6/193; 7/166; 8/78, 94, 146

CHRON. SERIES: Brouncker’s clerk, 6/193; servant to Marquess of Dorchester, 7/166; work in Ticket Office, 7/166, 418; injured in riot, 8/860(2); charged with malpractices, 8/63-4 & n., 76, 83-4, 97, 100-1, 103, 109; championed by Brouncker, 8/83, 97, 100-1, 103, 104, 178, 189, 203, 215, 217; dismissed, 8/103; case referred back to Board, 8/145; appeals to P, 8/109, 150, 169, 200, 204, 238(2), 302; Pett’s attitude, 8/166, 200; case discussed, 8/178, 186, 198, 343-4; report on, 8/204-5, 212-18 passim, 343-4; referred to Council, 8/376, 379, 385, 386, 388; Carkesse reinstated, 8/555; gives evidence against Board to Committee on Miscarriages, 8/523, 524, 531; appears before Brooke House Committee, 9/43; hostility to P, 8/392; asks forgiveness, 8/83, 97, 100-1, 103, 109; makes allegations against, 9/99; P’s MS. account of case, 8/186; case alluded to: 8/101-2, 150, 260

CARR, Sir Robert, M.P. Lincolnshire: attacks Sandwich in Commons, 9/174 & n. 2

CARR, [William]: petitions Commons

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Indeed it was even more valuable for Pepys's diary, with its much higher count of dinner parties, family visits, river outings and general hobnobbing. Thus the entry on Sir William Penn (which occupies 3 pages or 6 columns of the printed text of the Index) has only two references under the heading 'alluded to'—only two extras or legbies as it were; for the rest a run scored off every ball. Similarly with Sir William Batten.

A further concern was to make sure that each reference was indexed in the right place. How, for instance, do you index Pepys's references to his health? Remedies are easy—you have only to list names: balsam, enemas, rabbits' feet, and so on. But diseases can be difficult: you have only Pepys's description of his symptoms to go on and you have to decide when he writes of 'taking cold' whether to index it under 'colds/coughs/sore throats', or under 'colic', or whether to leave it doubtful, under a query, as though it were under 'there's a lot of it about'. Fortunately, for the entry on Health I was able to consult Dr Charles Newman of the Royal College of Physicians, who combines a scholar's knowledge of Pepys and seventeenth-century medicine with modern clinical experience. Or again, when Pepys goes to the Exchequer, it is necessary to ask whether his visit relates to his work in the Navy Office or his work as Treasurer of the Tangier Committee. I found that often this could not be settled, and the Index at these points says so.

Several people told me when I started work on the Index that I ought to use a computer. But it would have been extremely difficult (as well as expensive and time-consuming) to programme the machine. I doubt in fact if a computer can be used for indexing a text like Pepys, in which there are so many indirect and submerged and ambiguous references. To have determined who he meant by 'my Uncle' or by 'the Duke' or by the unattached pronoun 'he', and so on, would have meant going back to the text. A computer print-out would be ugly to look at and awkward to handle, and its rows of figures in which the eye loses its way would lead to countless errors and constant irritation. Again, I was advised to have the Index made for me by someone else—by an expert on indexes. But the diary can only be indexed from the inside, as it were—from a knowledge of its contents and their significance. I had already come to this conclusion when I read the opening sentence of the manual on indexing published by the Cambridge University Press. There the author, G. V. Carey, says in effect: 'Get someone else to write your book for you—but be sure you write your own index'.

Well, I wrote the Index: but the important thing is that it was Pepys who wrote the book. And few editors can have had the good fortune to be given a task which from start to finish has been such a continuing delight.

#### Entries to note

**Wheatley Medal 1984**

Publishers, as well as librarians and indexers, are invited to send in recommendations for the Wheatley Medal, 1984.

This medal is awarded annually by the Library Association, in conjunction with the Society of Indexers, for an outstanding index first published in the United Kingdom during the previous three years.

Printed indexes to any type of publication may be submitted for consideration, provided that the whole work, including the index, or the index alone, has originated in the United Kingdom.

Recommendations, giving author, title of work indexed, date of publication and publisher, and covering 1982, 1983, or 1984, should reach the Development Secretary, The Library Association, 7 Ridgmount Street, London WC1E 7AE, not later than 4 February 1985.

**Forthcoming conferences**

The 8th International Online Information Meeting is to be held in London, 4-6 December 1984. Information from Organizing Secretary, Online Information Meetings, Online Review, Learned Information Ltd, Besselsleigh Road, Abingdon, Oxford OX13 6LG.

The 27th annual conference of the National Federation of Abstracting and Information Services (NFAIS) is to be held in Arlington, Virginia, 4-6 March 1985. The conference theme is new developments in electronic publishing and information services. Further information from NFAIS, 112 South Sixteenth Street, Suite 1207, Philadelphia, 19102 USA.

Enclosed with this journal is the booking form with full details of the Society of Indexers' fourth international conference, 'Indexing now', to be held in Durham, 5-7 July 1985. Book now to taste the joys described in The Indexer 14 (1), 1. See you there.

**Indexers from T to S**

Since its change of title from 'The Society of Indexers' to merely the 'Society of Indexers' on the adoption of its new constitution in February 1983, our organization now files under S, not T. Roseate olfactory characteristics unmodified.