INDEXES REVIEWED

This selection of extracts from reviews does not pretend to represent a complete survey of all reviews in all journals and newspapers. We offer only those quotations which members have sent in.

Our reproduction of comments is not a stamp of approval from the Society of Indexers upon either the reviewer’s assessment of an index, or his competence to give an opinion.

Extracts are arranged alphabetically under the names of publishers, within the sections: Indexes praised; Two cheers! Indexes censured; Indexes omitted; In a class by themselves; Obiter dicta.

Indexes praised


‘The index appears at first sight to be rather slender, but it proves to be perfectly adequate when taken in conjunction with the extremely detailed table of contents, which spreads over nearly thirty pages.’

Blackwell: Naval warfare today and tomorrow, by Hubert Moineville, trans. by Cdr P. R. Compton-Hall (141 pp., £15). Rev. in Lloyd’s list, 17 March 84.

‘An index and a detailed contents list facilitate reference to what is undoubtedly an important contribution to the literature of naval warfare.’

British Museum Publications: The catalogue of medieval lead-glazed earthenware tiles . . ., by E. S. Eames (1239 pp., £135). Rev. by D. Mynard, Archaeological journal 139, 82.

‘The indexes to the catalogue are meticulous—there are nine covering all aspects, but by far the most useful is Index I which relates the illustrated tile designs to the catalogue so that the reader is able to ascertain the origin of the type of tile illustrated.’ [indexed by the author, with the help of Anne Kellock]

Butterworth: Sport and medicine, by Peter N. Sperryn (271 pp., £14.95). Rev. by Dan Tunstall Pedoe, British medical journal, 28 Jan. 84.

‘There is a useful index and appendices which cover doping control relations and recommended contents of medical bags. At half the price of a pair of jogging shoes this book is extremely good value.’


‘The volume is fully indexed, which serves to increase our appreciation to [sic] its author for having brought this useful harvest of NT material together for us in one place.’


‘The index is superb.’


‘This is a work of massive scholarship which will be normative for years to come. It fulfils a need noted by all standard histories of medieval thought. Its bibliographies and indices (sic) of names and topics amply complete this want.’


‘The useful index (absent from contemporary books far too often) is also very welcome.’


‘Most of Adrian Norman’s book is devoted to 100 such horror stories, carefully indexed and categorized.’


‘It also has a very helpful index.’


‘It is an accurate text, fully comprehensive, and the index with its cross-references is more than adequate for revision.’

Cirencester Excavation Committee: Romano-British cemeteries at Cirencester, by Alan McWhirr et al. (220 pp., £18.50). Rev. by David Miles, Trans. Bristol & Glos archaeological society 101, 83.

‘A welcome feature, particularly important in text-fiche reports, is the thorough list of contents and index.’

‘Computer assistance has allowed the volume to be equipped with a sophisticated index that features multiple cross-references of key terms. Almost 40% of the volume is devoted to detailed indices [sic] which make the bibliography very easy to use.’


‘As a manual for those seeking a general treatment of germane issues, the book is adequate, especially since it has a line index and references that are quite up to date.’


‘Enhanced as it is by excellent documentation and indexing, this book will deservedly enjoy the status of a reference work catering for a wide range of interests.’


‘A competent and extensive index incorporates a glossary of technical terms.’


‘P. also deserves the highest praise for his excellent indexes.’


‘An exhaustive index makes the encyclopaedic character of the book complete.’


‘The . . . book also benefits from Questions for Discussion at the end of each chapter and indexes.’


‘Four indices [sic] enhance its usefulness.’


‘The book is well indexed and references are given for most chapters.’


‘. . . a quality reference work [whose] use is facilitated by excellent author, title and subject indexes.’


‘Certainly this well produced, annotated and indexed book requires steady concentration, but most readers will warm to a scientific author capable of such telling confessions as “It is hard to love a quartz timepiece” and “We seek vacations in places where we can put our watches away and let nature wake us”’.


‘. . . very extensively researched and comprehensively indexed . . . But it is a stimulating book . . . and one worth keeping handy for its index—as a checklist of all recent written material on social policy and urban deprivation.’


‘I particularly like the clear way in which the book is written in precise note form; it is easily readable and well indexed and cross-referenced.’


‘A very useful addition is a forty-page index, compiled by Norman Hillyer, which helps the user to supplement the material provided in main articles with incidental material occurring elsewhere.’

[How very nice, both to see the Indexer credited thus in a review, and that this praise should be awarded to the diligent Editor of this section.—Journal Editor.]


‘The footnotes are unfortunately placed at the end, but the select bibliography, the index of names and subjects, and that of biblical references deserve praise.’


‘Carefully compiled indexes to the first 20 volumes of IEJ are a special bonus to the scholar.’


‘Mr Adams’s purposes are both humane and realistic. He
offers his compilation as a working tool—a check-list of titles of books illustrating London, and a subject and name index to the plates in such books—for the swiftly expanding cohorts of professional “picture researchers” working for publishers . . . . Finally, no less invaluable, perhaps even more so, are the indexes—topographical; artists, engravers, architects, authors, book titles and select publishers; and a select bibliography.'

London Record Society: Trinity House of Deptford. Trans- actions 1609-35, ed. by G. D. Harris (1983, 194 pp., £10). Rev. by Susan Rose, Mariner's mirror 70.1, 84. 'There is a helpful index and a small glossary.'


Macdonald & Evans: Structural detailing level II, by B. Currie & R. A. Sharpe (123 pp., £4.95). Rev. by Tom Fisher, NATFHE journal, June/July 83. '. . . and ending with a short but useful glossary of technical terms and a comprehensive index.'

McGrath, Wilmington, NC: Official Catholic teachings: update 1979 (1981, 567 pp., £35). Rev. by James V. Schell, Theological studies 43.1, 82. 'A very useful series, easy to use; the index of references is itself worth the cost.' (indexes sell books!)


Macmillan: Discovering the National Trust, by John M. Parry (£5.95). Rev. by Valerie Bierman, Scotsman, 4 Feb. 84. 'A useful gazetteer gives more information on properties and places of interest throughout the country, and the index is very comprehensive.'

Macmillan: The handbook of British archaeology, by L. & R. Adkins (319 pp., £5.95). Rev. by T. Schadla-Hall. Museums journal 83, 83. 'To support this body of information there is also a very sound bibliography and a well-worked index. In short this is an impressive piece of work.'

Manchester Univ. Press: The family tree detective: a manual for analysing and solving genealogical problems in England and Wales, 1538 to the present day, by Colin D. Rogers (1983, 145 pp., £7.50). Rev. by A. V. Reed, Genealogists journal, Sept. 83. 'A good index and cross references make this book a useful addition to a genealogist's bookshelf, particularly if he or she is concerned in the giving of advice to others.'

Mansell: Aspects of library development planning, ed. by J. Stephen (1983, 289 pp.). Rev. by Melvyn Barnes, Library association record 85.7/8, 83. 'There is also a good index, and as a nice touch the indexer is identified as Alan Seal.' (one of our members, and a contributor to this issue of The Indexer; more nice touches invited)

Methuen: Swift: the man, his works, and the age. Vol. 3, Dean Swift, by Irvin Ehrenpreis (£40). Rev. by Sylvia Clayton, Daily telegraph, 6 Jan. 84. 'The index is a model of its kind.' [The indexing was under the supervision of Irvin Ehrenpreis and compiled by Peter J. Conlan, Patricia A. Welsh and Gwyneth Hatton with the help of Barbara B. Smith, W. Jones De Ritter, Luis R. Gamez, Pamela L. Lein and Shannon S. Echols.]

Oxford Historical Society: A bibliography of printed works relating to Oxfordshire. Rev. by J. Cooper, Oxoniensia 48, 83. 'The index is very full, indeed much fuller than that in the original bibliography in that names of societies and even of journals are indexed, as well as personal names. There is a separate list of subjects. There are also extensive and detailed cross-references within the bibliography, for instance from "Friendly Societies" to the 27 societies listed under individual places, and from "Architecture" to 20 building lists or articles about individual buildings or parishes.'


Routledge: The animals' who's who, by Ruthven Tremain (£9.95). Rev. by Matthew Symonds, Daily telegraph, 24 Feb. 83. 'There is a fine selection of well-produced illustrations and a useful index which gives the names of owners, an essential in a reference work such as this.'


Cameron, Lloyd's list, 28 Jan. 84.
'A full bibliography and a detailed index are included.'

'There is no general topical index. Fortunately there are good indexes of people, places, and ships. They are indispensable. Many names, especially of people, are introduced abruptly. Background information appears later if at all. Also, the text tends to skip back and forth in time in order to pursue several concurrent threads of narrative. The author often seems to assume that characters mentioned many pages earlier will be recalled without effort. Since in every four pages we are introduced to, on average, eight new people, five new places, and a ship, this is a lot to expect.'

'Well written, physically attractive, copiously illustrated and with commendable bibliographic and indexing standards, the book is a credit to the author, publisher and the National Endowment for the Humanities, a grant from which assisted its publication.'

Univ. of Delaware Press: Edward Hicks: his 'Peaceable Kingdoms' and other paintings, by Eleanor Price Mather and Dorothy Canning Miller (1983). Rev. by Constance Cain Hungerford, Quaker history, Spring 84.
'Thorough bibliographical listings of books, articles, and exhibition catalogues, and a detailed index augment the value of the catalogue.'

'The indexing is thorough and the annotation full.'

'The index is well prepared.'

'I shall certainly refer to "Methods" whenever I need any guidance on any aspect of book design... the ingenious index, which doubles as a glossary, will also be of lasting use. (the book's author was a speaker at the SI Conference, Cambridge, 1981: reported in The Indexer 12 (2), 65-72)

Two cheers!

'It seems to me that handbooks need a fairly complete index if they are to fulfil their purpose of providing the required information quickly, even, or perhaps especially, if it is probably only a first step to more extensive searching. Perhaps the next edition will list in the index all the computer databases mentioned, thus saving the time of the user and making this handbook even more of a boon to the special librarian.'

'The subject-index at the end of volume 2 makes both volumes more useful still; and though too many members of the bibliographies which open each section are in German (and there is no author index—a sad lack), this is a text which, with just a few reservations, can be recommended to students of the New Testament.'

Mansell Publishing: A guide to manuscripts relating to America in Great Britain and Ireland, ed. by John Raimo (1979, £27.50). Rev. by Keith Mason, Archives 16.69, April 83.
'Whereas the index entries for subjects such as 'The War of Independence or for geographical districts like New York are broken down into categories, those for individuals are not. The reader has therefore to look through fifty-four undifferentiated references to George Washington.'

'The chapters are written by experts, and, apart from a few who were so tall in their time that their heads can still be seen, most are still active. What is more, the book is very attractively got up, Oxford fashion, though a single index for two volumes is a miserly mistake which the publishers would do well to put right next time round.'

Indexes censured

'There is an index provided, but as it is for three other collections of papers, as well as the one described here, it is not easy to use.'

Cambridge Univ. Press: Archaeology as human ecology, by K. Butzer (364 pp., £22.50). Rev. in Geographical journal 149, 83.
'The index is barely adequate.'

'Rightly, since it comes from a printing house that prides itself on the excellence of the appearance of its titles, this book has been handsomely set in Bell type with a pleasing light-blue binding. It is sad to say that it has been issued with a woefully
inadequate index. I doubt if that would have happened with a book from Oxford.' (not? see below in this section)


'The weakest part is the index, which appears to get very thin after about p. 30: for example, it gives H. R. Tedder at pp. 8-9, but he also appears on pp. 18, 23 and 42.'


'There is also a rather skimpy index to places, made less useful by a subdivision into the revised counties so that anyone wanting a reference to Roseberry Topping would have to know that the site, once in Yorkshire's North Riding, is now in Cleveland. There is a very brief subject index which includes entries such as "asparagus, wild" and "Woad"; and there is a very helpful biographical index, 40 pages long, giving information about many of Aubrey's correspondents and associates. The editor and annotator deserve applause for their efforts... nevertheless, for the price the purchasers could have expected fewer errors, fewer omissions, fewer misidentifications, a much fuller index...'

Harper & Row: Live and learn, by Guy Claxton (£5.50). Rev. by Janet Spruce, Senior nurse, 3 May 84.

'The few diagrams are childish but simple, but their relevance is not always clear without the text. Clear references with good notes are provided at the end but the index certainly appears to be limited.'


'This book from the Ellis Harwood Series in Mathematics and its Applications is theoretical in tone, and lacks detailed discussion of applications to crystals and minerals—indeed the only reference to a mineral in the index (diamond crystal) is incorrect!'
Indexes omitted


'*...a source book whose only defect is the absence of a comprehensive index.'*


'Both price and quality of paper deserve criticism, and it was someone's lazy decision not to provide an index, all the more reprehensible in a professional institution.'


'The book is short, treats only selected aspects of the novel's scope and background, has no index, and contains an inexcusably large amount of misprints.'


'My only complaint is that there is no index: a serious omission which makes it difficult to use as the work of reference it deserves to be. I hope the publishers will see fit to remedy this in future editions, and in future volumes of what is clearly a helpful series.'


'Overall, a stimulating series of articles, with excellent chapter notes and bibliography, only suffering, in common with many other similar volumes, from poor, and totally unnecessary, photographs, and the lack of an index.'


'For readers without prior knowledge of a vastly complex operation that spanned all of occupied Europe, and engaged thousands of officials at all levels of the Nazi hierarchy, the editor's linking commentary will be insufficient to establish the dimensions and chronology of the crimes discussed in this transcript. The book's usefulness is further reduced by the absence of an index.'


'As in other BAR publications that I have seen, there is no index—a pity, in a work like this.'


'This volume is well printed, with a justified text (perhaps the use of a word processor means that before long much needed indexes will appear).'


'As in the previous volumes, one regrets the lack of an index which would enhance a volume valuable for reference as well as for enjoyable reading.'


'With so many so-called science writers turning out stuff that is either inaccurate or unintelligible, and sometimes both, Richard Casement leaves a great gap by his death unfortunately. My only complaint is that this book lacks an index.'


'INDEX on Censorship, the magazine from which this anthology has been compiled by its editor (and surely it ought to have an index?) was founded in 1972, "to help banned, censored and persecuted writers, whatever their nationality, religious creed or political persuasion".'


'Unfortunately both books share the same failing of a lack of index.'


'Regular users will know how the miscellaneous contents of the *Jahrbuch* are best quarried once an index covering several years has appeared, as it last did in 1982. The present volume,
thinner than usual, has, like its individual predecessors, no index at all. Would modern technology allow for an index that was updated annually over a number of years? This would surely increase the immediate usefulness of this valuable publication.'


‘An index would have considerably enhanced the usefulness of the book.’


‘It is only unfortunate that it lacks index and bibliography and is not printed very well.’

Herald, Scottdale, Penn.: *It is not lawful for me to fight: early Christian attitudes toward war, violence, and the state*, by Jean-Michel Hornus (1980, 370 pp., $13.95). Rev. by Francis X. Winters, *Theological studies* 43.1.82.

‘The volume, containing a superb table of patristic sources and ample bibliography, strangely lacks an index.’


‘The books are not easy to use as reference books due to the lack of an index...It must be hoped that volume 4 will include an index covering all four volumes.’


‘This cheap paperback, with its gauche cover, inferior paper and non-existent index, might appear just another run-of-the-mill publication. But it contains dynamite.’


‘The information must have taken a great deal of time to catalogue and although well presented, there is no contents page or index, except the title of the main sections at the bottom of the page. A thumb index might have helped the reader.’


‘The book could do with an index in future editions.’


‘Since there is no index the book can only be used under the very simple chapter headings. These do not always give concise enough information, but one soon becomes familiar with the contents.’


‘Regrettably, Mr Quartermain’s last book is marred by the publisher’s failure to enhance its usability with an index.’


‘Ottaviano Technical Services is a leading American energy management firm. Sadly its book lacks an index, and the reader is simply overwhelmed by the sheer volume of material.’


‘There is no index.’


‘If one wants to be critical there is no index.’ (one does)


‘There is no index either of texts or subjects dealt with—and for preachers this must tend to limit its usefulness.’


‘Surprisingly, the book contains neither an index nor a bibliography of King’s writings.’


‘There is no index at all. Would modern technology allow for an index that was updated annually over a number of years? This would surely increase the immediate usefulness of this valuable publication.’


‘This fascinating and instructive tale is told by Mr Hoskins clearly, excitingly and simply, as he told all his criminal tales throughout his career; he is entitled to blow his own trumpet, but he does so with charity and discretion (though also without an index).’


‘It is a pity there is no index but it is all logically and conveniently arranged so that with some familiarity, reference becomes easy.’


‘There is also an extensive bibliography but, by a regrettable economy on the part of the publisher, the index has been omitted.’


‘There are rich pickings for footnote-hunters, who will, however, regret the absence of an index.’
"The primary requirements of any index—that it should be accurate and comprehensive—are meticulously observed; but Latham has gone much further than that. He has provided a volume whose synoptic summaries and gargantuan lists offer a flavour of the whole work, an evocation of the man Pepys and a positive incentive to read on. Under the heading animals we encounter an alphabetical menagerie from baboons to wolves that would have done credit to Noah. The heading clerk (of the acts), sub-section Perquisites, introduces an Aladdin’s cave of bribes and gifts: silver flagons and candlesticks; gowns and gloves full of coins; sides of beef and barrels of oysters; a diamond ring and a warming pan, among the many other inducements offered to Pepys and usually accepted, in return for contracts. The entry for food takes up a full seven columns, a Rabelaisian spread that extends from such homely fare as strawberries and syllabub. Then, as if in penance for such culinary excess, there are an answering seven columns under the heading health in which all the melancholies of the flesh are anatomized, from abscesses and agues to ulcers and vomits. Sometimes the entries for individuals recall the elliptical wit of the index to Pottle’s edition of Boswell’s London Journal in which Boswell’s amour with Louisa Lewis is brilliantly encapsulated as an ironic instance of the rake’s progress. Here the entries for Mrs Bagwell and for Deb Willet are shaped into little comic narratives. Thus with Mrs Bagwell we read:

BAGWELL—, wife of William: her good looks, 4/222; P plans to seduce, 4/222, 226; visits, 4/233-4; finds her virtuous, 4/234; and modest, 5/163; asks P for place for husband, 5/65-6, 163; P kisses, 5/287; she grows affectionate, 5/301-2; he caresses, 5/313; she visits him, 5/316, 339; her resistance collapses in alehouse, 5/322; amorous encounters with; at her house, 5/350-1, 6/40, 162, 189, 201, 253, 294; 7/166, 284; 8/39, 95; 9/221 . . ."
Obiter dicta


'They every should contain some observation about the index, just to show that the reviewer has reached the end. I have no fault to find in it. Amongst the names are Andrew Leggatt, Mr Justice Lloyd, St Paul, Lord Roskill, Dr Runcie and St Swithun. Let the lawyers apply their ejusdem generis rule to that group.'


'A glance through the back pages of the book reveals that its scope extends far beyond what one might expect from the title, as suggested by the following consecutive entries in the glossaries and index: bituminous coal and black hole, stalactite and star cluster, cephalod and cupheid variable, red clay and red shift, and most delightful, quartzite and quasar.'

'One of the less satisfactory areas of children's publishing is the lack of quality non-fiction, especially for younger children. We have come a long way from the sanctimonious didactism of Victorian children's books, but there are several areas which have seen little or no progress over the years. Glossy productions can have unimaginative or sometimes inaccurate text, little or no indexing, stereotyped illustrations—quantity abounds but much is tripe masquerading as caviare.'

—Valerie Bierman in The Scotsman, 4 Feb. 1984

'Tony Benn doesn't make every list. Despite more than 50 mentions in the text of Austin Mitchell's book, Four Years in the Death of the Labour Party, he is not listed in the index. Methuen, the publisher, appears at fault, but Mitchell is not lucky with his indexes. His researchers indexed another of his books, Westminster Man, so assiduously that they included Khan, Genghis, and Peep, Bo. The publisher struck these out and insisted on taking over the index for the latest book. Mitchell says it's a shame than Benn was omitted from the index since, 'if he'd been included it might have done something for him'.'

—The Times diary, 17 Jan. 1984

Our warm thanks to those who contributed to this section: Jane Angus (Crathie), Ken Bakewell (Liverpool), Geraldine Beare (Woking), Hazel Bell (Hatfield), Philip Bradley (Dundee), Anne Cope (Chadds Ford, Penn.), Rosemary Dawe (London), John Gibson (Stourport-on-Severn), L. M. Harrod (Harpenden), Brian Hunter (London), Cherry Lavell (London), Hilda Pearson (Cambridge), Helga Perry (Canterbury), David Pygott (Ashtead), Madeleine Swann (Twickenham), Mrs A. M. Thomas (London), Elizabeth Wallis (Kew), Elizabeth Wiggans (London).

Contributions of review extracts welcomed by Norman Hillyer (Hatherleigh Vicarage, Okehampton, Devon EX20 3JY). Closing dates 30 June and 30 November for the subsequent issues.

Roman index

If Trajan's Column has rightly been described as the most important single source of information about the equipment of the Roman army, then the O.R.L. reports must run a close second. As a corpus of small finds illustrative of the life and work of the garrison of the Upper German-Raetian limes, the volumes have been thumbed now by generations of students of Roman military affairs and will continue to serve as a seemingly inexhaustible mine of useful (and sometimes curious) information.

Now at last an index to the finds is available, based on 22,000 file cards, four years' full-time and several more years' part-time work by Dr Oldenstein.* The portable finds were described, identified and published originally by a relatively small band of experts whose perspicacity and consistency of classification made this Finds Index a feasible project; but the sheer donkey-work involved in its preparation would be hard to under-estimate.

The content of the Index is comprehensively summarized in the first twenty-six pages. It follows, so far as practicable, the O.R.L. scheme of classification based on the raw materials of the objects and subdivided according to function. Useful cross-references within the index are provided. Standard modern corpora and special studies are frequently cited—an extremely valuable means of clarification. (The references appear in abbreviated form and the absence of a bibliography explaining them is unfortunate.) The pottery index is perhaps the author's greatest tour-de-force. Readers may note that the section on bronze 'objects of unknown purpose' has only nine entries compared to the fifteen printed pages of identified bronzes—a tribute both to the O.R.L. compilers and to the indexer.

Even when the reader may disagree with the identification, there is no difficulty in locating the parallels. A particularly helpful feature of the Index is two pages of line-drawings of iron tools and fittings with the corresponding German terminology.

Some scholars, of course, will still prefer to leaf through the published drawings and photographs in search of their quarry; but for most the Index will be a heaven-sent short cut. Dr Oldenstein deserves our gratitude in full measure.


—reproduced by permission from Antiquaries journal No. 63, 1983. The Society of Antiquaries is to be congratulated on the recent publication of the index for vols. 51-60 of the journal, completing its set of ten-volume indexes.