Farewell Address, 255, 258, 262
*mentioned, 449, 482, 668;
*also quoted, 122, 154, 172, 176, 188,
203, 208

Looking over the thing in proof, I no longer experience this intense aesthetic satisfaction; but there was once a surprise of joy, which ought to be recorded.

The typing was finished, and then I found the publishers' letter. *The index was about 50 per cent too long.* It was also about three weeks overdue. And I was too exhausted to be able to bear to contemplate resuming work on it. In fear and trembling I took it up to London early in May; and was told a few days later that it had given great satisfaction (I beamed) because it was actually alphabetic (collapse of vanity). Apparently many authors haven't grasped this basic principle. So I was allowed to go free until the proofs arrived.

It was an extremely instructive experience. I am glad I did it, but, as I began by saying, never again. A professional indexer (I remember how long, or rather how short a time Mrs Bell took over the index to my book on Arthur Ransome) is a much swifter, surer operator than any author can hope to be; and I don't think that a professional's work on my history would have been significantly worse, if at all, than my own. It might indeed have been better. The hitch remains the cost. The author is supposed to bear it, and naturally resents the expense; but my experience has convinced me that an index is so integral a part of a book that it really is the business of the author, and of no-one else, to make sure it is a good one. It must be, of course, an allowable professional expense for tax purposes. But I think the real answer is that the author should get a realistic estimate of what a good index will cost him, as soon as possible, and make sure that his advance includes an allowance for buying one. And so I shall tell my agent, next time a contract has to be negotiated.

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**A glossary for indexers III**

*Further suggestions for terms and definitions for the lighter aspects of indexing*

**Alphabetization:** A topic for debate, used to waken somnolent gatherings of indexers. Bloodshed may be averted by the introduction of the subsidiary topic: British telephone directories,* on which all agree.

**Letter-by-letter arrangement:** the obvious method for ordering index entries, as everyone with an ounce of intelligence agrees.

**Word-by-word arrangement:** the only possible order that anyone but a complete idiot would consider using.

**Chain indexing:** occurs only twice yearly, before the spring and autumn publishers' lists—indexing being as seasonal an occupation as hop-picking. As one index typescript is rushed off to the publisher, a fresh pile of proofs awaits attention, and the phone rings with a third/fourth/fifth offer . . . days of wine and roses to dream of through the bleak, empty, actual spring and autumn.

**Free-reading:** undertaken for pleasure, at leisure, with no obligation to underline, note names or devise headings as one reads. But the habitual responses may prove too strong.

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*British telephone directories: lists of subscribers ordered according to a system which few indexers profess to understand; they are therefore enraged that they nevertheless manage to use them quite successfully.

**Out-guessing the reader:** not only recognizing every likely heading under which a subject may be sought, but anticipating too the more *outre* alternatives a reader may suppose possible, so that every searching eye may be met with a cross-reference.

It has been suggested to us that this glossary should include computer terminology. But when BASIC language already includes the serious command, 'Disable character entering input buffer event', and its users can make frequent use of 'Goto' without ever feeling the urge to add, 'Thou'rt an arrant knave', what further absurdity may one propose?

In lieu, we invite readers to send us their original short stories based on the following selection of calls from *The BBC microcomputer user guide*:

- JSR OSBYTE
- Write to I/O area SHEILA
- Read key within time limit
- Flush selected buffer
- Remove character from buffer
- Cancel VDU queue
- Disable character entering input buffer event
- Set ESCAPE flag
- Acknowledge detection of ESCAPE condition
- Explode soft character RAM allocation
- DIM GAP
- RUN
- Enable ESCAPE pressed event.
The article which follows is by one of the more unexpected writers on indexing, Constant Lambert (1905–1951), prodigy in his time amongst twentieth-century British composers, hero still of a small but strong cult. Though he doesn't now get into all musical dictionaries, and current recordings of his music are few, Constant Lambert will be remembered on the musical front at least for Rio Grande suite (he preferred his Piano Concerto) and in prose for his Music Ho! which from 1934 educated most of us in modern musical thought. This is still in print in the USA.* Lambert had his prejudices, but they were studied ones, and as composer, executant and conductor he knew in all musical spheres what he was writing about.

But Constant Lambert as theoretician on the index? This seems unlikely until you know more of the character of the man. Keynes called him 'potentially the most brilliant person I have ever met', and there is a school of thought which regards him at least as much a loss to literature as to music. In fact, Lambert was a man of many parts and did write a considerable amount of journalism. Among topics he took were the cinema and railway music, and the journals to which he contributed were very varied. A man of questing mind and difficult personal life (he is acknowledged as a basis for the composer Moreland in Anthony Powell's novel sequence A dance to the music of time) he seems to have had the need to express himself in media other than music.

*and is likely to be reprinted later this year by Chatto in the UK.

What, no index?
Constant Lambert

'The book would be improved by a map.' How often has some young author had the gilt taken off the gingerbread of his self-congratulation by that damning phrase at the end of a review. But that is as nothing to the chagrin he sustains when told 'It is absurd that this book should have no index.'

In the case of a map he can console himself with various excuses: (a) he had not been asked for one, (b) he was never very good at drawing maps anyway, (c) what did they think his book was—a detective story? In the case of the index he has no such frail excuses ready to hand for reasons which the average reader may not realise.

To start with, some publishers are brutal enough to insist that the author himself shall supply an index. This I can assure you is an almost intolerable burden for the inexperienced author. The house becomes littered with scraps of paper, hasty memos on the backs of laundry bills, and such blue-pencil scrawlings on the walls as 'Don't forget the letter Q.' Finally, when the dread task is finished, he discovers all too late that in his daring survey of Napoleonic history, 'Elba and After,' he has left Waterloo out of the W's because he thought it had already been listed under B for Battle. He is thus convicted of incompetence.

If he feels unequal to the task but still has to fulfil his contract he is forced into the humiliating and costly expedient of employing a professional hack to do the job for him. Not only does this involve wild risks owing to the fact that professional indexers combine extreme technical ability with a complete indifference to the theme of the book, it also means that the author has received even less than the exiguous sum promised him.

So ultimately it is not too surprising that ‘What, no index?’ appeared in Liliput 22(6) June 1948, an article to which Geraldine Beare has drawn our attention, and which is reprinted here as a curiosity. I am not going to comment on the article except to say that it is expressed with Lambert's usual wit, his line being that indexes may please from an aesthetic point of view. You can read it now, reprinted by courtesy of Syndication International. Accompanying the article were two cartoons by Hoffnung, one by the title, a version of the 'Wot, no . . .' figure, Mr Chad, which was all the rage then.

One final point. To see how far the author followed his precepts, I checked the indexes to Lambert's own books. By 1948, the date of this article, he had published Music Ho! in two editions, both indexed. It was to reach a third, the last edited with a useful introduction by Arthur Hutchings. It may be assumed that Lambert did his own indexes, as he initials them. Disappointingly in a sense, the indexes have no scattering of the Lambert wit and are largely confined to names. Some forenames are omitted, but I suppose Stravinsky and Wagner don't require such pedantry, and some entries have the dreaded 'strings' of page numbers. The indexes in the new editions were revised.

Whether there is any other aspect to Lambert and indexing which remains to be discovered I don't know, but this is certainly a good example of his writing, which you may enjoy. As for specialized aspects of music and indexing—we should welcome an article on this subject for this journal.

J. D. Lee

*The Indexer Vol. 14 No. 3 April 1985 177