
I found no difficulty in accepting the publisher's blurb that this was a 'fascinating dictionary' of 'pluralities' of 'hundreds of . . . animals, persons and things'. One can in the book follow words and ideas one after another ad infinitum, and find continued interest in the varieties of use of the collective noun.

The reference after so many entries to a date (only) was tantalizing to me (e.g. fifteen—a rugby team, 1880; pride of lions, 1486), but I suppose the inclusion of the full source of each entry would have made the book inordinately long. There is an index of 'Sources' at the beginning of the book, but these appear to be in the main only collections themselves. I must say, however, that references to Dame Juliana Berners' 'The boke of St. Albans. 1486' almost drives one to go on to study mediaeval terminology! But why 'triumvirate—1601'—Cicero and Livy knew the word long before this?

A collective noun gives to the group to which it applies some quality not possessed by the group's members taken severally, as is brought out by the many terms used to describe men and women in their many roles. The whole has a personality different from its parts.

Doubtless this is a book which must develop with each edition (this is the second) as new words are added. I noted omissions—'corporation', 'number', 'postbag' (? British usage), 'troika', and would suggest additional meanings of 'group' (players of popular music), 'house' (Christ Church, Oxford), 'network' (a large system, e.g. rail, TV). The two parts of the dictionary are useful—the A-Z arrangement of group terms and (the other side of the coin) the index of all the items about which a collective term is used.

BRITTON GOUDIE

Publications received and publications noted


Bookman's price index: a guide to the values of rare and other out-of-print books. Vol. 31, edited by Daniel F. McGrath. Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, 1985. 1,013 pp. 29 cm. ISBN 0-8103-0636-0, ISSN 0068-0141 (cased): $165.00. This volume contains about 35,000 works from the catalogues of about 100 booksellers. Over 20 of these are in Britain.


This volume is the 15th anthology of the annual 30 best articles about librarianship and related areas. The aims: 'to recognize superior writing, research and opinion' and, 'to help the reader separate out a few jewels from the mass of undifferentiated material which finds its way into librarianship and information science' (Introduction).

I am sorry to say that I found the majority of items extremely boring and anything but jewels. Only duty obliged me to read them in their entirety. There were only 4 items that I would have included in the collection and that I wish I had written myself. These are: 'Beyond the appendix with gun and camera' by Paul Barnett which first appeared in The Indexer 13 (4) Oct. 1983, 232–5; 'Think globally . . . act locally: collection development and resource sharing' by David H. Stam, from Collection Building, 5 (Spring 1983), 18–21; 'Must we limit the catalog?' by Maurice J. Freedman, first published in Library Journal, 109, February 15, 1984, 322–4; 'The underside of computer literacy' by Douglas Noble, first published in Raritan, Spring 1984, 37–64.

Three of these are only a few pages long, with the author getting straight to his point and writing in an incisive and entertaining manner—virtues which are lacking in most of the other items in the book. Noble's article is a splendid 21-page jeremiad against the fashionable cult of computer literacy, with its false premise that high-tech jobs need high-tech skills and where, in a world in which appearances function as reality, Time Magazine's 'Man of the Year' for 1982 was a machine—the computer. An article to reread and reflect on. There is no index.

TOM NORTON


Information World Review: the Information Community Newspaper, Managing Editor Peter Hyams. Abingdon: Learned Information (Europe) Ltd. No. 1, Feb. 1986. Published monthly. Annual subscription £18.00. This newspaper is aimed at the European information professional, mainly in the electronic field. Articles are mostly in English, with a few in foreign languages.


Publishers directory 1986: a guide to approximately 12,000 new and established, commercial and non-profit, private and alternative, corporate and association, government and institution publishing programs and their distributors. Includes producers of books, classroom materials, reports, and databases, Linda S. Hubbard, editor. 6th edn. Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, 1985. 2 vols. 29 cm. Indexes. ISBN 0-8103-0413-9, ISSN 0742-0501 (cased): $240.00 (set). This work lists about 12,000 presses in the United States and Canada which are not listed in Literary Market Place. It includes three indexes: Publishers, imprints and distributors; Subject; and Geographic.

Trade directory information in journals. 5th edn. London: British Library Reference Division, Science Reference Library, 1985. iv, 40 pp. 30 cm. ISBN 0-7123-0726-5 (pbk): £4.95. (British Library business information service.) This is a guide to 250 journals which regularly include trade directory information and complements the Science Reference Library’s substantial holdings of trade directories.

THESAURUS CONSTRUCTION

NEW EDITION

Jean Aitchison and Alan Gilchrist provide a totally revised and updated edition of the practical manual which first appeared in 1972. All the latest international and British standards are included, and there is an extensive bibliography which will enable the reader to construct specialist thesauri.

Available from October.

Aslib Publications (Sales), Information House, 26/27 Boswell Street, London WC1N 3JZ. Tel. 01-430 2671