INDEXES REVIEWED

edited by Norman Hillyer

These extracts from reviews do not pretend to represent a complete survey of all reviews in journals and newspapers. We offer only a selection from quotations that members have sent in.

Our reproduction of comments is not a stamp of approval from the Society of Indexers upon the reviewer's assessment of an index.

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

Indexes praised

ABC-Clio: The urban politics dictionary, by John W. Smith & John S. Klemanski (1990, 613 pp, $60). Rev. in Booklist 87(14), 15 March 1991. 'Coverage of some 600 terms concerning city politics and urban life ... All related terms appear in the index where reference is also made to entries for related terms ... Found also in the index are people (Martin Luther King, Jr.; Ed Koch), places, governmental agencies (U.S. Postal Service) and U.S. Supreme Court cases mentioned in other entries. Thus, using the index enhances the value of the book.'

Cambridge Univ. Press: Fish evolution and systematics: evidence from spermatozoa, by B. G. M. Jamieson (1991, 319 pp, £40). Rev. by Colin Patterson, Biologist 38(5), Nov 1991. 'The book contains plenty of clear diagrams and is very well indexed. The text itself is pretty indigestible, but this is certainly a reference work rather than a straight read.' (saved by the index)

Cambridge Univ. Press: Religion, learning and science in the Abbasid period, ed. M. J. L. Young, J. D. Latham & R. B. Serjeant (1991, 587 pp, £60). Rev. by Robert Irwin, Times Literary Supplement, 29 Nov 1991. 'Study of the index ... (compiled by Barbara Hird, it is one of the best indexes I have ever come across) suggests one of the problems. Medieval Arab writing cannot easily be accommodated within familiar literary genres.' (a double accolade for an SI member)


Clarendon Press: Inventing the barbarian: Greek self-definition through tragedy, by E. Hall (1989, 277 pp, £30). Rev. by R. G. A. Buxton, Journal of Hellenic Studies 111, 1991. 'There is a truly splendid index, compiled, the author reports, by her mother. Any scholar tempted to skimp or even skip in this matter (French colleagues please note) may learn from H.'s example just how valuable an intellectual tool an index can be.'


Facts on File: Biographical dictionary of medicine, by Jessica & Elmer Bendiner (1990, 284 pp, $40). Rev. in Booklist 87(13), 1 March 1991. 'The subject index refers the reader to entries for people related to topics, so someone seeking information on penicillin, for instance, is referred to the articles on Fleming, Chain, and Florey. Although the indexes do not provide page numbers, the alphabetical arrangement provides easy access to the material.' (provided you don't mind hunting through each article.)

Facts on File: Current events on file: news digest with index (1990– , biweekly, $225). Rev. in Booklist 87(12), 15 Feb 1991. 'The index follows the same format as Facts on File, although in larger print . . . Instructions on using the index are printed in a box on each right-hand page.'


Forest Press (Albany, NY): Abridged Dewey Decimal Classification and relative index, devised by Melvil Dewey, ed. John P. Comaromi et al. (12th edn 1990, 857 pp, $75). Rev. by William A. Garrison, Library Resources & Technical Services 35(3), July 1991. 'The part of [this twelfth] edition that impressed this reviewer is the Relative index. Terms for new concepts have been added . . . Placenames are in proper form according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules, second edition, with appropriate qualifiers . . . The index in the twelfth edition also has the appropriate numbers, and see references have been eliminated . . . saving the user a two-step lookup process. This edition represents a significant improvement over previous editions, particularly in the indexing.'

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that the authors have gone to a good deal of trouble to index and cross-index the comprehensive list of cases they describe, not only by the case name but also by subject matter.


'... a very detailed index providing easy subject access.'


'There is a comprehensive index of subjects and proper names. Helpful features of the index are lists of labour conflicts under the cities in which they occurred and under the headings black workers and women workers.'


'The English Index is an additional help in more than one way. For instance, the engraver's cutting tool called a haurin is cross-referenced to a number of both Greek and Latin terms in the Glossary, including the neologism talpa ("mole," and in Medieval Latin, "battering ram"). In the English Index also, Neo-Latin authors mentioned in the Glossary are identified with brief biographical studies.'


'This large-octavo volume is beautifully produced, clearly printed, delightfully illustrated, and well indexed.'


'Indexes by artist, title (of production), subject, and author are provided. Indexing is especially important, as the arrangement of the book is complex.'


'The detailed index is particularly useful for locating the odd pavilion (Futurama), entertainer (Sally Rand), or theme ("Century of Progress").'


'All this is exceptionally well presented: the illustrations are numerous and pertinent, the short bibliographies appended to each chapter carry the reader forward into the subject, and the index could hardly be bettered.' (full marks for editing)


'[photo-reproductions of previously published articles] but with continuous pagination and an invaluable index.'


'For once, in one of these publications, the index is reasonably detailed, occupying ten pages compared with the two, three or four which are more common; and the index usefully collocates references under . . . various functional headings.'


'... and the index gives access to every person and many useful topics.'


'The index, as usual, is good enough to encourage us to use the book for reference.'


'Acronym use is kept to a necessary minimum, and the reader will appreciate the fact that the index appears to cover most of the acronyms used.'


'The book is clearly set out, the listings of each town being alphabetically by counties, with an index which gives a brief summary of the different marks for each town.'


'Indexing of hymns is very important, and the indexes in both books are excellent. Besides the essential First Lines and Titles, Authors, Composers, and Tunes (alphabetical and metrical), both books list Themes (fuller in R&S and easier to use because arranged alphabetically) and Biblical Passages closely related to the hymns, and BPW has in addition Sectional Cross References and Hymns for Family Worship. The decision of the compilers of [both] books to reject a section of children's hymns makes this last extremely valuable.'


'A comprehensive list of proper names provides quick reference to birthdays and events.'


'The occupations index is useful and interesting. It provides many see and see also references and helpful subdivisions (clergymen by denomination, manufacturers by product, etc.).'

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**SPCK:** *Doctrine and practice in the early church,* by S. G. Hall (1991, £15). Rev. by Janet Tomlinson, *Church Times,* 27 Dec 1991. ‘Hall has rendered the complicated issues of early Christian experience and understanding in very straightforward language, leading the reader through the maze of material in confident style. The index is correspondingly clear, detailed and helpful.’

**Univ. Press of Colorado:** *New Mexico’s buffalo soldiers, 1866–1900,* by Monroe Lee Billington (1991, 258 pp, $29.95). Rev. by R. S. Lowe, *Choice* 29(5), Jan 1992. ‘Six maps ... and a detailed index contribute to the value of what will become a standard work in the history of the West.’

**Wallace-Homestead:** *The price guide to autographs,* by George Sanders et al. (2nd edn 1991, 608 pp, $21.95). Rev. in *Booklist* 87(12), 15 Feb 1991. ‘Several new chapters and hundreds of names have been added ... The subject and name indexes have also been made more efficient.’

**Wilson, H. W.:** *Indexing from A to Z,* by Hans Wellisch (1991, 461 pp, $35). Rev. in *Wilson Library Bulletin* 66(7), March 1992. ‘It should be no surprise that this book’s index is an exemplar. In its earnestness, authority, and appreciation for complexity this resembles the venerable *Chicago Manual of Style ... and promises to be a similarly useful and important reference to those who tend to the little details that, if left untended, can make a book look like a teenager’s room rather than an inviting room in *House Beautiful.’*

**World Council of Churches:** *Dictionary of the ecumenical movement* (1991, 1196 pp, £44.95). Rev. by C. S. Rodd, *Expository Times* 103(8), Aug 1992. ‘The indexes are excellent, and the highlighting of the main discussions is most useful to the reader.’

**Zell, Hans:** *Guide to archives and manuscripts relating to Kenya and East Africa in the United Kingdom,* by Anne Thurston (1991, 2 vols, 1196 pp, £120). Rev. by Judy Palmer, *Library Association Record* 93(8), Aug 1991. ‘Similarly it was irritating and unaccountable, to find no contents listing at the front of the second volume. By contrast the index was a joy to use.’ Rev. by Michael Wise, *Reference Reviews* 5(4), 1991. ‘The very detailed index stood up to my attempts to fault it.’ *(index by Lyn Greenwood, SI member)*

**Zondervan:** *The NIV exhaustive concordance,* by Edward W. Goodrick & John P. Kohlenberger (1990, 1853 pp, $49.95). Rev. in *Booklist* 87(11), 1 Feb 1991. ‘Indexes every word in the Bible, including the most frequently used articles, conjunctions, prepositions, and pronouns in their own index. Three separate indexes are also included for Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek words, making this work appropriate for scholarly researchers as well as less well advanced users. Another useful feature is an index that provides cross-references to and from words used in the King James Version.’

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**Two Cheers!**

**Chadwyck-Healy:** *Black biography 1790–1950: a cumulative index* (1991, 3 vols, S900). Rev. by Mary Cargill, *College & Research Libraries* 53(2), March 1992. ‘The index itself has indexes by place of birth, by occupation, by religion, and of women. The occupations are determinedly non sexist – business person, military person, etc – which can cause confusion. Is a female medical worker a nurse? And since doctors are usually identified as such, why is there no separate listing for them?’

**Faber:** *The Faber book of drink, drinkers and drinking,* ed. Simon Rae (1991, 541 pp, £15.99). Rev. by Jeffrey Abbott, *Times Saturday Review,* 14 Dec 1991. ‘There is a good but not flawless index. Therein, without excessive dedication, I found some faults. O’Rourke is always misspelt as O’Rorke; there is no reference to that arch-bibulist Porson, who in moments of relaxation was a great classi scholar. Stay your wrath: he is found on pages 104–7, polishing off the embrocation. Cyril Connolly deserved an entry for his cure for a hangover: a tuft of the dog that bit you. Pages 427–8 raise the spirits again: Trappist silence broken in shoot-out as monks defend monastery wine.’

**Facts on File (New York):** *The A–Z of women’s sexuality,* by Ada P. Kahn & Linda Hughley (1990, 362 pp, $24.95). Rev. by Barbara Kemp, *College & Research Libraries* 52(2), March 1991. ‘The liberal use of cross references in the body of the work is enhanced and expanded by a detailed index which provides access to reference within the entries. Although there are some inconsistencies in the cross references and indexing, they are relatively minor.’

**Gale:** *Guide to international education in the United States,* ed. David S. Hoopes & Kathleen R. Hoopes (1991, 589 pp, $110). Rev. in *Booklist* 87(14), 15 March 1991. ‘Criticized in the first edition were the three indexes, which now have been combined into a single index listing subjects and keywords. The indexing is so complete that the many grants and awards of the Council for International Exchange of Scholars are listed under three different headings. One idiosyncrasy lists a publication entitled *Update Hong Kong under Update and Hong Kong but not under Hong!*’

**Garland:** *Materials and strategies for the education of trainable mentally retarded learners,* by James P. White (1990, 348 pp, $40). Rev. in *Booklist* 87(12), 15 Feb 1991. ‘An index provides access by author, title, and general subjects to item numbers. Very specific subjects are not cross-referenced (dental care is listed but not teeth or personal hygiene), nor are joint authors listed.’

**Garland:** *Women writers: from page to screen,* by Jill Fenton et al. (1990, 483 pp, $45). Rev. in *Booklist* 87(10), 15 Jan 1991. ‘Separate indexes provide access to the filmography by film titles and titles of literary sources. The lack of headers at the top of index pages leads to confusion about which index one is using.’

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'There is an impressive index of Puritan authors and works quoted which readers will find very useful. Unfortunately it is far from complete . . . Nor has it been checked very thoroughly, since the Puritan writer Thomas Hooker was certainly not the author of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity and the Book of Common Prayer appears under Cranmer, T.: yes, but . . . !'


'. . . and Ken Bakewell's entertaining but scholarly survey of indexing—it was a wise decision to keep this. The overall index by Shelagh Fisher and Tony Oulton has obviously quoted which readers will find very useful. Unfortunately proceeding chapter by the same author on "Subject bibliographies". The index has no entry for either page reference while the editor is only indexed for one chapter reference. '


'The ten-page index provides references to both text and illustrations and makes use of bold-faced type to differentiate between the two; however, no special type is used to indicate the maps. The inclusion in the index of maps with specific content, e.g., The Khrushchev Years, Czechoslovakia 1968, could be verified, while those with a more diffuse topic could not, e.g., The Demise of Communism.'


'If I found the index somewhat frustrating. For example, the Farlie-Gumbel-Morgenstern family is not a main entry under the letters F, G, or M, but is an entry under B for bivariate distributions.'


'Cross-referencing is, however, largely lacking in the text, though the authors have tried hard to produce a good seven-page index . . .'


'What is most appealing in the book appears in the last 43 pages of cross-referenced bibliography containing approximately 1,600 entries. In addition, the index is complete and detailed.'


'There is an extensive list of references and a reasonably detailed index.'

(Thanks to an anonymous Australian reader, this is the first time we have been able to publish four reviews to illustrate 'you pays your money . . .')


'It has a classified arrangement, which unfortunately could be more detailed. For example, the sixteen pages listing information on the forty-eighthers are arranged alphabetically by author. To find all the material on Carl Schurz, the reader either has to look at every entry or constantly refer to the index. (but what are indexes for?)


'There are excellent indexes including a subject index (this is less successful in parts—there must be well over 1,000 identity numbers under the heading "Distributors" and following them up would be a daunting task) and a country index. There is also an unusual but very useful contacts index—an alphabetical listing of all the personal names culled from the companies index. In its liberal use of such indexes the printed directory reveals its unmistakable database origin.'


'The index is reasonably comprehensive, though some of the entries seem arbitrary.'

Indexes censured


'The profusion of facts, figures, opinions, suggestions, sample policies, and trivial lore is indeed impressive if one reads the volume from cover to cover, but its index of only six pages does not allow the precision of entry which is commonly desirable in works of such scope. There is a very practical article by Anthony Amodeo entitled "How to Move or Shift Books," for example, but no entry in the index for either "moving" or "shifting." Similarly, those interested in using Macintosh computers for public use will find an excellent fillip by Patrick R. Dewey on that subject—but no mention of either Macintoshes or personal computers (or microcomputers) in the index.'


'The book's layout and illustrations are superior, but the index is inadequate.' (for the coffee-table only?)

Avebury Academic Publishing: Client access to records: participation in social work, by David Shemmings (1991, 123 pp). Horrors from the index spotted by a librarian:

'adoption [followed by]'
INDEXES REVIEWED

administration, issues of [not the only example of misordering]

... Archie Kirkwood, M.P. [sic]

... effects on relationship between worker and user [indeed]

... openness [with 20 undifferentiated page numbers]

... recording [with 34 ditto]

(Did the 'academic' publishers leave the indexing to the new office boy? One entry is 'learned helplessness'.)


'This is partly the result of the indexing which seems to be distinctly whimsical. Assuming I had missed some critical references, I turned to the index to find nothing under "California", "Francisian", or "USA". What I was looking for was eventually found under "Crustal localities: USA.'


'Calling it an encyclopedia, however, is a misnomer . . . One cannot go directly to the book and expect to find a term or a topic in an alphabetical or classified sequence. Instead, it is necessary to use the table of contents or the brief index to find specific information . . . The index has a glossary integrated into it, i.e., some entries are merely a term with definition and may or may not refer to a page number. Acronyms are listed with full name spelled out in parentheses . . . Personal names are also included, but there is inconsistency in including birth and death dates. The index could be better split into three parts—glossary, biographical information, and expanded subject and topical terms. It does not cover photograph captions . . . In spot-checking some entries, it was discovered that page citations were off by a page or two in many instances.' (last-minute revision again?)


'The index is contemptible.' (perhaps that will stir the publisher to do better!)


'This is an unaltered reprint of the 1973 edition . . . The index retains the old errors and takes no account of Addenda II. Could no severe sub-editor be found at Oxford to tidy up the chaos, which detracts so much from the real virtues of the book?'


... The Clarendon Press could also have better served Peterson's scholarship by enhancing the back matter: the long and informative notes are not keyed to the relevant text pages, and the index can be frustratingly unhelpful (58 indiscriminated entries for Emery Walker, 51 for ornaments, 47 for the Chaucer, etc.).'


'Turning to technicalities, there are some weaknesses. The photographs lack contrast; the index does not provide all the page references for items cited; references in the text to points in other chapters are not given page numbers; and the footnote numbering for chapter 11 is muddled.' (where was the editor at the end?)


'Unfortunately all readers will be impeded by the disastrous indexes. The author-index is pointless; the subject-index is inaccurate (incomplete and incorrect entries), presents long strings where articulation is urgent (66 references to Valentinus), misses cardinal topics (like the ignorance of the aeons in Valentinus), and wholly omits subjects which do not fit some prejudicial plan (like Paul's letters to the Corinthians and the Gospel and Letters of John). Cannot authors, publishers and indexers improve the idiotic way English theological books are sometimes presented? Scholars should wake up to the need to make books usable; brilliance like Pêtrement's is not enough.'


'This book is a valuable reference source. However, in this capacity the index fails. Entries for individual compounds are inconsistent and, in many cases, missing.'


'The subject index is unworthy of the name. There are entries under "A", "An" and "The", anyone seeking Northern Ireland will find it at the beginning of the Ns under both "N Ireland" and "N. Ireland". "Directory" has been metamorphosed into "direction", and an item under "Angels" turns out to be about Engels! The author index has no joint author entries. A good idea poorly executed, then; the compilers should seek the advice of people who can tell them how to describe and index publications properly.'


'As a source-book, this dictionary is annoying. Its index, mainly of single words, is inadequate. Not all the quotations are indexed. I frequently failed to find one I knew was there; looking for one which might not be would be very frustrating.'


'If Artemis Cooper had succeeded in getting a good index (to give 11 lines of figures under Duff Cooper's name and six under Nancy Mitford's with no clues to any of them is a waste of everybody's time) . . .'
INDEXES REVIEWED


‘Desirable improvements include more systematic subject indexing, title keyword indexing, and separate indexes for CD-ROMs or files available on DIALOG and CENDATA.’


‘And then I turned to the index. I have made so much uproar about inadequate indexes that you might think publishers would by now always provide proper ones, if only to ensure that they are not pelted with ordure from the hand of Levin, the Indexer’s Champion . . . Screech’s “index” is an abomination . . . First, it is nothing but a list of proper names, whereas there is no writer in all history who cries out more loudly for an index to his ideas, his themes, his comments, his attitudes, his quotations, his self-descriptions, his musings, his experiences, his divagations, his jests. But that is not the worst. The wretched dreary parade of names is anyway useless, because it is nothing but a string of undifferentiated page-numbers, with a pathetic sop in the form of bold-type numerals indicating “more than a passing reference”.’


‘The author-title index is inadequate since not all sources are indexed. In addition, to discover what specific industries are covered, one must browse by chapter or check the SIC numbers in the table of contents.’


‘But ignore the index—all the page numbers are wrong.’


‘One small gripe (for which I blame the publisher, not the author) is that the index is woefully inadequate—looks as if it has been computer-generated.’


‘The publishers include a master index which helps you to locate an organisation when you are not sure under which category to look—but I found the master index surprisingly unreliable when it came to associations—even AIIM (the Association of Image and Information Management) with nearly two pages of entries in the Associations section failed to get into the master index!’


‘The maps, important for a book on an explorer, are rudimentary, as are the index and the endnotes.’


‘The index is sadly inadequate, wholly omitting the many schools referred to.’


‘The index is hopeless, omitting, e.g., “Corcyra” but including “Corinth”.’


‘The index is enormous, but not as well thought out as it could have been. “Computerized axial tomography” (a technique for scanning the brain) is only listed under “c”, for instance, a curious choice. I suspect that the index was largely generated by means of a computerized word search, which tends to result in a huge index, but not necessarily an intelligent one.’


‘There are three indexes to facilitate access . . . Coverage is not comprehensive . . . Cross-references in the indexes are marginal; for example, the American Library Association is not cross-referenced to its component units while the entry note states that more than 90 such awards exist. Nor is librarianship cross-referenced to information science and vice versa, in the subject index.’


‘The index could be much improved. It lacks an entry for “register”, although the register storage class is mentioned in several places. Some of the terms that are present lack important entries, such as the mention of the “exit” function on page 106 in connection with program termination.’


‘According to the preface, country and area name changes are cross-referenced in the index. However, there are no visible cross-references. The index would be more useful if they were provided.’


‘... the Smithsonian Press ... has failed to edit adequately, and permitted an unhelpful index, in which all botanical names are grouped under the three headings—orchids, vines (lianas), and trees (presumably those that have bushy tops).’


‘If it has a fault (apart from a very skimpy index rerum), it is the occasional effect of insular self-satisfaction.’


‘The Index, purporting to offer a systematic way to use the book thematically, is inadequate: not enough space, insufficient articulation, frequent confusions and errors, and reference to sections instead of pages, which means that for some topics you are sent to the whole 39 Articles! There is no table of contents. So a cautious welcome, but please improve.’


‘There is no proper bibliography, and the index could be fattened.’ (included in a review of books for Christmas)


‘There are a disconcerting number of errors in the indices (sic), so that the pages cited are often incorrect. The reader will need to look within a page or two of the citations to find the information cited in the index. I found none further than two pages away, and most were within one page.’ (someone forgot the index when the pagination was changed at the last minute?)

Indexes omitted


‘The glossary should end with an index of all terms covered and, to help in finding a needed word, alphabet guide words should appear at the top of every page.’


‘I encourage the publisher to develop a subject index because the table of contents is too sketchy and the many subjects that Van Groningen introduces are too varied.’ (with all those pages, isn’t this too gentle?)


‘The clarity of the exposition alone would qualify this book for essential reading, although the absence of an index can be frustrating.’


‘Missing from this edition are the pronunciation guide, the subject index (so useful for trivia questions) ...’


‘When it comes to names, bureaucratic regimentation sets in, subjecting us to W(yslom) H(ugh) Auden and Sir Harold George Nicolson. Yet there is no index.’


‘... there is no index locorum at all. Anyone familiar with S’s work will realise how preposterous this is. It is not just that so much of the volume consists of close examination of particular passages; in these examinations he typically discusses many parallel passages, real or alleged, with an equally meticulous attention to detail. The book is a storehouse of learned commentary, but its treasures are not systematically stored: adequate indexing would have multiplied its usefulness beyond measure. As it is, while we are indebted to the Oxford Press for making this collection available, one must regret the faults of presentation which render it a flawed memorial to an outstanding scholar.’


‘Without an index, access to information about a particular team is limited.’


‘The only index is to citations ... This book is now the most important standard work on its subject.’ (and so deserves better indexing)


‘It lacks an index and is by no means comprehensive.’
INDEXES REVIEWED


'The book has no index, but the table of contents is detailed. One potential retrieval problem is the division of different types of services or organizations into separate chapters, rather than in one A-Z group. An index would have ameliorated this.'


'In current jargon the book is very “user-friendly”, its only shortcoming is the lack of an index of place names, which would have been helpful in finding one’s way around the great quantity of information it contains.' (very user-friendly?)


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'There might be a use for the writer [to consult the book] were there an index. As it is, you can’t discover that a pretty but brainless female escort is called a bimbo, unless you know that she’s called a bimbo, when you can look up “bimbo”.'


'Alpha is one of about 600 sources noted in this book—that is roughly two-and-a-half a page. Since many are cited more than once, it amounts to an awful lot of sources. You may also recognise V. G. Kiernan as emeritus professor of history at the university of Edinburgh; further, the arid title may cause some sinking of the heart. Be of good cheer. There are two main indications of what the book is really intended for: students, armchair travellers, tourists and . . . for those tracing Irish roots.” . . . Neither map nor index are provided for the American unfamiliar with Irish geography.’ (so they’d all better stay at home)


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'There is no index nominum of the dedicants recorded in these inventories. This may be symbolic.'


'Too many ideas are raised in too many places without being followed through or examined, and the absence of an index does nothing to help the reader to pick out the few gems that shine through the muddy texture of this book.'

The book deserves attention. It is regrettable that the lack of a Scripture index limits its use as a reference book.'


'Jimmy Breslin’s Damon Runyon is a decidely odd biography: it is slightly odd, to begin with, that it should have neither an index nor illustrations, but it is much odder that Breslin should choose to write of someone he so evidently dislikes.' (so maybe those omissions are significant?)

In current jargon the book is very “user-friendly”, its only shortcoming is the lack of an index of place names, which would have been helpful in finding one’s way around the great quantity of information it contains.’ (very user-friendly?)

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JSOT Press (Sheffield): The conflict of faith and experience in Christianity: it is slightly odd, to begin with, that it should have neither an index nor illustrations, but it is much odder that Breslin should choose to write of someone he so evidently dislikes.' (so maybe those omissions are significant?)
INDEXES REVIEWED


'There is no index, nor is there any bibliography of secondary sources that would provide assistance in using and interpreting military records.' (no index? and a thousand pages?)


'If there is a weakness in this book, it is the lack of an index.' (scholars' press?)

SCM/Trinity Press International: An itinerary for New Testament study, by Dieter Lührmann (1989, 131 pp, £5.95);


'The lack of indices (sic) in both books reviewed is surprising, considering their intended use as resources.'


'The book lacks an index that would link individuals with movements.'

Simon & Schuster: Moscow coup, by Martin Sixsmith (1991, £7.99);


'Both Martin Sixsmith and John Morrison draw convincing sketches of how Russia is trying to overcome this historical legacy. It is making the effort in double-quick time—as indeed are the publishers in putting out these books, neither of which contains an index.'


'There is no index, and at the very least a list of illustrations should have been included so that one could find what one was looking for.' (why is this publisher so commercially short-sighted as to eschew indexes in its publications?)


'Members of the Institute for the Study of American Religion . . . have produced a handy, one-volume guide to the various spiritual and social phenomena, personalities, and institutions which the new age has spawned . . . no index.' (so, how handy?)

Obiter dicta


'The index has 10 references to Horace Rumpole. There is a distinct risk that television viewers—who sometimes find it hard to distinguish truth from fiction—will treat these citations as proof that Rumpole really exists. But judging by some of the advocacy quoted in this book, it seems he does.'


'The index is full of mischief. It may not go down well with Quakers (who "swallow popish bait, 243"), or in Scotland ("deservedly conquered, 187; Pope still regarded as Antichrist in, 281") or in Peterhouse, Cambridge, where once again it seems that the past may not have been unrecognisably different from the present: "a noisy mafia there, 69; unventilated Fellows, 159; a liberal interlude, 281".'


'For the first time in 500 years most of the children in the West are less able to cope than their parents. They are asked to live in an age dominated by IT [Information Technology] and by learning rather than teaching, yet a very large minority are illiterate and innumerate; they cannot use an index . . . '

Our warm thanks to those who contributed to this section: Anon (Australia), Sheila Ary (De Kalb, Illin.), Ken Bakewell (Liverpool), Hazel Bell (Hatfield), John Bowman (London), Barbara Britton (Cambridge), Margaret Cooter (London), John Farrell (Cotham), Jill Ford (East Hoathly), Moyra Forrest (Edinburgh), Philip Found (Lincoln), John Gibson (Wichenford), Lyn Greenwood (London), Grace Holmes (Caversham), Ann Hudson (Bognor Regis), Brian Hunter (London), Cherry Lavell (London), Ben Lipetz (Nassau, NY), Richard Raper (Hove), Peter Robins (Yateley), Christine Shuttleworth (London), Jean Simpkins (Hitchin), Barbara Smith (Bowgreave), Richard Tarrant (Holton-le-Clay), Claire Troughton (Birchington), Elizabeth Wallis (Kew), Ray Ward (Sheffield), Rick Wiebe (Langley, Brit. Col.), Karin Woodruff (Leicester).

Contributions of review extracts welcomed by Norman Hillyer (Charters, The Avenue, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AJ). Closing dates 30 June and 30 November for the subsequent issue—the earlier the kindlier.

Indexes censored
by hand (after printing)
to ward off libel

The index to the biography of rock singer Ronnie Spector, Be my baby (Macmillan, 1991), has a sub-heading whited out under the entry for her husband. Its references were potentially libellous and have been removed from the text. To launder the index, though, 20,000 copies had to have Tippex individually applied.