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


'The index is extensive and user-friendly (for example, there are entries for generic drugs and their common brand names).'


'The ninety-page Bibliography is structured to conform with the text, one section to each chapter, and the index is admirable. This book provides an indispensable basis for the further discussion of UK information policy.'


'For the extra price, Painter's extra space, with pages both larger and more numerous, provides for better print and more spacious layout. This, combined with good use of typography, emboldened sub-headings, a more complete decimal numbering system, a more detailed contents list and better indexing, makes for greater ease of reading and easier reference use.'


'Furthermore its use as a reference text is made easy by the inclusion of an accurate and very extensive index.'


'The work is completed by a bibliography of over fifty pages (even though it is quite selective) and by an index worthy of the Anglo-Saxon tradition in this field. This index is the more useful since the collective nature of the undertaking renders repetition inevitable.' (translation of French review kindly provided by Barbara Hird, who created the Index)


'The 115-page comprehensive index, along with a classified list of biographical entries and contents listed by topics, enable the user to locate information on any topic in the encyclopedia.'


'...the general topic of "infections" is covered in a number of different places, though this difficulty is ameliorated by the comprehensive 140-page index.'


'It is most attractively written, extensively and very usefully noted, and generous in its acknowledgment of the writers and sources. It also contains that joy to the interested reader—an excellent index for future reference.'


'Full of fascinating material, beautifully produced, and well indexed to provide access to the riches within, this book is a worthy memorial to an exceptional scholar, and one who is sorely missed.'


'There is a full and witty "Index of matters and persons discussed", as well as an "Index of Latin words and phrases elucidated" and an "Index of passages interpreted or amended".'
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'Those who wish to review the evidence might turn to the 900 pages of notes, bibliography and index. (They reinforce the book's value as a tool for directed research, and wise librarians will invest accordingly.)'


'The subject index is an excellent aid, containing some 30,000 indexed items.' (by Caroline Barlow. Registered Indexer)


'The book itself is arranged in no discernible order, but it has the advantage of good indexing and the indexer himself enters into the spirit of the thing by adding jokes; a piece on the origins of pencil grading (H. HB and so on) gets an index entry under "2B or not 2B" as well as "Pencil lead classification" and four other references. The index is thorough: an answer to a question about Murphy's Law mentioned the propensity of buttered toast to land buttered side down, and the index includes "buttered toast" as well as Murphy's Law and Sod's Law.'


'The subject index of some 1500 main entries and frequent sub-entries and cross-references is an invaluable tool for locating items of specific interest.' (we have now learned that the Indexer was Barbara E. Cohen of Champaign, Illin., and are delighted to rescue credit from anonymity)


'Asbefits the work of a former information scientist the book includes both an excellent index and a useful bibliography.'


'The book, in its English rendering, is nearly perfect. The two carefully wrought indexes [biblical, general] are praiseworthy.' (translator's work of supererogation?)


'The index at the back of the book ensures that you get to the right piece of advice just when you need it. It's very useful.' (index by Elisabeth Ingham)


'The volume ends with an excellent set of indexes (not indices, please—both Celebration and its nearest rival from Mayhew fall into this old linguistic trap). Apart from the comprehensive Acknowledgements and Permissions sections—plus an important and practical note on Copyright—there follow a Liturgical Index, a Topical Index, a Tune Index and a Metrical Index (hooray; every tune which has one is named and its metre given both in the music text itself and indexed—this is very useful for "picking and mixing" familiar and less well-known tunes); a very detailed and well-researched Scriptural Index, the section concluding with First Lines and Titles, in which many hymns can be readily found under their first lines and the more commonly known description (e.g. How Lovely on the Mountains and Our God Reigns).'


'One of the other interesting features of Profound is its indexing. The firm has created a single standardized controlled vocabulary index that can be searched across multiple databases from different vendors... subject headings are not created automatically by machine, but by human indexers. Such transformations would take a great deal of human judgment, and to Profound Inc.'s credit, it retains that critical human element here.'


'... students will now have an excellent basis for any project they attempt, whether it concerns research on gem species or variety, via the excellent index...'


'...the indexes are a mine of information; while it is no surprise to find many collections of Shakespcriana, one might not expect to discover early materials relating to Francis Bacon in Freiburg and Heidelberg, the British and Foreign Bible Society in Tübingen, or Thomas More in the Karl Marx House at Trier.'


'The Index, as well as identifying all Gladstone's correspondents and contemporaries, and listing the libraries of works Gladstone read his way through, also includes a fully comprehensive subject index. Opening the page completely at random I see “Clinton, Henry Pelham Fiennes Pelham, 5th Duke of Newcastle”. Then there are some 300 reference dates, divided into twenty-eight subject sections, some of which have three or four sub-sections. At the end, the mark of a great indexer, it says, “see also Clumber, Crimean War, Odebeck, Piedites, Thistlethwayte”. In all there are 250 pages of closely printed type, covering every conceivable subject to do with Gladstone's life and career from Northcote to nettle-rash and income tax to ice cream.'

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'The index is comprehensive, although, because of the discursive nature of the text, it does not always lead as directly to the information sought as might be expected.'


'The index is adequate if inconsistent; most aircraft are entered under their particular name whilst others are entered under their manufacturer's name. For example, there are no entries under well-known companies such as Boeing, Grumman and Saab, yet you can find their planes listed under E-3, E-6A and Draken. However, look up Messerschmitt in the index and you will locate the BF109; similarly under Farman, you discover the 60 series. There are no cross-references.'


'The index is reasonably good, although it is surprising to see only one page referred to under additive.'


'A good index is marred only by the unhelpful arrangement of the many sub-headings under Stephens's own name.'


'The indices (sic) are, however, full and helpful (but it was wrong to divide the index nominum indistinctly between persons and places.'


'There has been a dramatic improvement in the new edition of *Chitty*. As Professor Guest writes in his preface: "Our publishers have assumed responsibility for the tables and for the index." They have done a superb job on the index. For example, in the old edition, if you were clever enough to find a particular point on Letters of Credit or Agreements to Agree (i.e. if you knew the cases so that you could find the relevant paragraphs from the table of cases) you would hardly have needed to consult *Chitty* in the first place. Now we have "Agreements to negotiate, contracts to make contracts, 2-097-2-098" and "Letters of credit, CIF contracts, 41-184, FOB contracts, 41-184, sale of goods, 41-227". The old index said "Force majeure. See Act of God". One then turned to Act of God and found "Act of God, British Railways Board conditions of carriage, 3171..." If you didn't give up, force majeure was indeed further down. But now we have a complete topic heading Force majeure clauses. There are altogether far fewer irritating cross references. Not surprisingly, the new index is very much longer (139 pages as opposed to 82), but rarely can so great an increase have had so beneficial an effect.' (index by Betty Moys, SI Treasurer)

Two Cheers!


'The index is comprehensive, although, because of the discursive nature of the text, it does not always lead as directly to the information sought as might be expected.'


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Indexes censored


'There is a list of acronyms, which seems complete, and a subject index which contains several inaccuracies. For example, under “Recycling”, subheadings for oils and solvents are given, with corresponding entry numbers. However, there is no subheading for “Recycling” under either “Oils” or “Solvents”, though there is under “Waste”. There are several such inconsistencies. Another confusing aspect of the index is that it has different entries for singulars and plurals. This occurs with soil(s), fluid(s) and plant(s), to name but a few.'


'Given the alphabetical arrangement, users will rely crucially on the index. This is predominantly of subjects and of categories of artefacts. The terms appear to rely chiefly on uncritical adherence to terminology used by those completing the questionnaires; it leads to jewels such as “lawn-mowers” and “prisoner of war handicrafts” but provides little help for larger subjects.'


'Unfortunately the index is disappointing, seriously reducing the value of the book as a reference. Particularly because of the wide readership envisaged, a good index would have been a valuable asset. For example, nutrition and health topics are referred to in many chapters, yet there is no index entry at all under nutrition and just two under health (aspects and effects). Cholesterol, which is now almost synonymous with oils and fats and nutrition, has been split under HDL, blood, serum, plasma etc. rather than making them subheadings under the single main heading, cholesterol.'


'The index is not quite as comprehensive as I would have liked. To give just two examples, ISO 9000 and BS 5750 are treated as separate and unrelated entries, with page references being unwarrantedly different for the two, and Baldridge appears in neither contents list nor index, although many pages are devoted to the Baldridge quality award criteria; this makes the book a bit difficult for the reader to use for reference.'


'Added to this [the complete absence of footnotes], the lack of cross-referencing and a detailed table of contents, an incomplete index and only a selective bibliography must all serve to disqualify the publisher’s claim of this being a work for professional historians and their students... Nevertheless, despite the presentation of the book, it may well become an informative companion to all the books about cathedrals and their architecture. It is simply unfortunate that, as a product of scholarship, it is not also an aid to scholarship.' (Editor? Editor!)


'The book also suffers from lack of an overall index. Although each chapter begins with a very careful and extensive index, this sort of index is very awkward to use in a reference book.'


'With so many chapters, its usefulness as a reference depends on the inclusion of a carefully produced and extensive index. Unfortunately, the index to 1200 pages of text runs to fewer than six pages. This method of publication is understandable when it is desired to achieve the rapid publication of a conference proceedings. This was the case with this volume’s predecessor, Developments in Food Science, Vol. 12, published in 1985. However in the case of the current book, there is no indication that it forms part of a symposium. Thus the lack of a consistent style of presentation or of tight editorial control, and the lack of a carefully prepared index appear not to be offset by any particular advantages, particularly since the lists of references include relatively few dating from after 1990.'


'The index is more random—you could get flustered looking up Kings or Royal family there and not realise till too late that you should have looked under Windsor (or Stuart), House of, or sought the “Princes and monarchs” running head between Nobel Prize winners and Quantities.'


'Also provided is a 38-page index on which much of the reference value depends... Within entries references are arranged chronologically, a common practice in this type of work, but one which can create difficulties for the user especially when, as in the case here, subheadings are short and qualifying detail or years rarely given. Under “Paisley, Ian”, for example, we have the subheading “on extradition decision”. As Paisley no doubt had views on every extradition controversy, it is not helpful to have to turn to the text to find out that the case referred to is the 1983 Irish Supreme
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'For a resource, the lists of sites and access providers are patchy, and the index, only half as long as the contents, is poor.'


'The book is let down by its inadequate and annoyingly arbitrary index: the reader interested in, say, the Internet or networking, will find scant indication of the extent to which these topics occur, while other subjects such as OCLC, which is mentioned in at least three chapters, are not indexed at all: and the different entries under "medical libraries" and "libraries, medical" are both curiously selective and, given the subject of the book, superfluous.' ("advances in information management")


'But the book should come with a warning. It is rather like being shown round a stately home by a guide who has to complete the trip in a limited time and hurries you from room to room without allowing you to stop and stare. (The highly selective and totally inadequate general index does not help.)'


'The book is nit-pickingly edited ("Bonn, Germany") and indexed with capricious inadequacy.'


'The index is poor. For example, the section on conversion disorders, which is essential in a book like this, is not indexed. In a work of 977 pages, the reader should be able to rely on a thorough and comprehensive index... It is sad that there is no reference to hysteria in the index, even in a historical context.'


'So a second edition or a supplement will be needed in the foreseeable future. It is to be hoped that the opportunity will then be taken of sorting out some of the muddles in the Names Index, where various scholars have taken on split personalities: C. S. Peirce has acquired an adjectival alter ego called C. S. Peircean, in addition to a presumably homophonous ghost called C. S. Pierce.'
Entries would greatly expand the usefulness of this source as Verso: Theatres of memory. Vol. I, Past and present in con

enough, by turning to the appropriate chapter, it is irritating
Cross rates”) nor find the excellent “FT Guide to world cur

we cannot locate the “Exchange cross rates” table directly

under that heading (it is under “Currency markets—exchange

markets”. Under “Currency markets” we have the “dollar,

authors, and there is no see and see also references.’

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Fount: By sex divided: the Church of England and women


Jonathan Petre, though certainly not providing the last

word on the history of the debate, has given us a valuable

first chronology, though it would have been even more valu-

able with an index.’

Hodder & Stoughton: Clinical research methodology for com-

plementary therapies, ed. George T. Leivith & David

Bloomsbury: The lion in the sand: the British in the Middle

East, by Gerald Butt (1994, £16.99). Rev. by Terry Waite,

Church Times, 13 Jan 1995.

‘I have only one negative criticism: the book needs an

index, and there isn’t one.’

Burnley & District Historical Society: My Burnley memories,

by Leslie Chappells (1993, 56 pp, £3);

David Jardine (Andover): Long memories of Smannell and

Enham Alamein, ed. David Jardine (1993, 109 pp, £3);

Book Castle (Dunstable): The family, childhood and school-
days: Bedfordshire’s yesteryears, vol. I, ed. Brenda Fraser-

Newstead (1993, 180 pp, £6.95). Rev. by Elizabeth


‘All the books would be more useful with proper indexes.

Only the Bedfordshire one attempts an index and this is simply

one of locations. An index to works such as these should contain, as

a minimum, the general heading of occupations, diet, housing conditions, health, schools, death and funeral

customs, leisure etc, with the many possible sub-headings.’

Marcel Dekker: Lactic acid bacteria, ed. Seppo Salminen &

Atte von Wright (1993, 442 pp, £165). Rev. by V. M.

Dillon, Int. Journal of Food Science & Technology, April

1994.

‘Many of the chapters discuss the production of antimicro-
bials by lactic acid bacteria, but there is no cross-referencing

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This is further exacerbated by the lack of an extensive index.’

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Aldridge (1993, 476 pp, £45). Rev. by D. N. Baron, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 87, Feb 1994. *This book, containing many good chapters, could have been very useful if ruthlessly edited... There is no index!*


**Houghton Mifflin:** *The day before America: changing the nature of a continent,* by William H. MacLeish (1994, 277 pp, $21.95). Rev. by John Brunner, *New Scientist,* 19 Nov 1994. *There is no index. Nor, though there are 28 pages of notes, is there any indication in the body of the text which passages the notes refer to. (Editor! Editor!)*

**IEPRC/Pira International:** *The electronic publishing business and its market,* ed. Brian & Margot Blunden (1994, 628 pp, £45/£70). Rev. by Mark Bide. *Learned Publishing,* 8(2), April 1995. *The inexusable lack of even a rudimentary index renders it next to useless as a shelf reference (as indeed does the failure to provide full contact details for all of the authors). It is slightly ironic that the rather contradictory nature of a printed book on electronic publishing should so strongly underline the advantages of EP by failing to include even these basic features. Perhaps the medium is the message.*

**Kyle Cathie:** *Myths of the world,* by M. Jordan (1993, 302 pp, £20). Rev. by Audrey Gregson, *The Year in Reference* 1994. *The biggest defect in this book, as a work of reference, is the lack of a comprehensive index. The dust jacket mentions myths concerning "bulls, dragons and snakes" and also "Theseus and the Minotaur", so the reader is prompted to look them up. I found dragons by chance in the miscellaneous section but it was impossible to track down all the bull and snake stories. I found some later while browsing. I found Theseus and the Minotaur eventually in the Greco-Roman title listing under "M".*

**Macmillan:** *And then their hearts stood still: an exuberant look at romantic fiction past and present,* by Mary Cadogan (1994, 322 pp, £16.99). Rev. by JS, *Times Literary Supplement,* 23 Dec 1994. *Cadogan’s good-natured survey (with its numerous witty plot synopses) will help the student and charm the general reader. It would, however, have been no less charming and a lot more helpful if Macmillan had provided an index.*


**SCM:** *The Anglican parochial clergy,* by Michael Hinton (1994, 389 pp, £19.95). Rev. in *Expository Times* 106(5), Feb 1995. *Certainly his readers will have been enriched and given much to think about by this most enjoyable book. But oh for a subject index!*

**Seren Press:** *Edward Elgar: sacred music,* by John Allison (1995, £12.95/£6.95). Rev. by Roderick Dunnett, *Church Times,* 12 May 1995. *Worst of all, despite an appendix detailing each work (including MSS; textual sources are, alas, largely omitted) and neatly cross-referred to the body of the text, there is no main index: disastrous for this kind of reference book.*

**Technomic:** *Aseptic processing of food,* ed. H. Reuter (1993, 313 pp, SFr135). Rev. by Mike Lewis, *Int. Journal of Food Science & Technology,* April 1994. *There is no index, which makes it especially difficult when using it to search for specific information. More attention to these aspects of presentation would have helped to influence its appeal.*


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**Obiter dicta**

**Amaising Publishing House:** *The Scottish fiddle music index,* ed. Charles Gore (1994, £49). Rev. by Magnus Linklater, *Times,* 29 Dec 1994. *... he has developed a computerised index which will allow you to trace a tune even if you can only whistle the first few bars. A complex coding system will identify the title, tell you who wrote it and then guide you to where it can be found. It is based on a scheme first developed by the late Breandan Breathnach, the Irish traditional music expert, but only now, through the use of computer technology, has it been possible to reduce it to its essentials and publish it in a single impressive volume.*

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'A formats index acts as a key to publishers... even something called "The bells send their greetings to me" which turns out to be an imprint of an Estonian publisher.'

Augusta-Richmond County Public Library (Georgia): Personal name index to the Augusta Chronicle (Georgia), vol. IV, 1821-1830, by Alice O. Walker (1994, $25). Rev. in Bluegrass Roots (Kentucky Genealogical Society) 21(3), Fall 1994.

'The information is a computer generated report, in alphabetical order, and thus contains no index.' (When is an Index not an Index?)


'For a preview of Remembering My Good Friends, try the index. (You're probably in it.) These thousand names are not just players in George Weidenfeld's story of his life and careers; in an essential way they are the man himself.'


'The problem of candour clashing with friendship he deals with by suggesting that those affronted should look up all the references to themselves in the index. They may balance out. This applies strikingly to L. P. Hartley, who might prefer with by suggesting that those affronted should look up all the references to themselves in the index. They may balance out. This applies strikingly to L. P. Hartley, who might prefer'


'Browsing the Index I came across 32 records under the term 000. Intrigued I looked at them and discovered that the 000 was the second part of a number in the text, e.g. 17,000 which appeared as a separate index term because the comma is delimitative.'


'The index was compiled by a colleague of the author, as Mulvany believes that an author is too exhausted from writing, rewriting, and proofreading a book to prepare a good index (p.23).'

'We read with interest Toth and Kimura's case report of a left-sided gastroschisis. It prompts this letter for a number of reasons... Firstly, we actually reported in the Journal of Pediatric Surgery (in 1988) a similar case of left-sided gastroschisis, by way of a letter to you. We, too, had missed a previously reported case... Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, the fact that Toth and Kimura missed our report indicates the need to have keyword subject titles for correspondence in the Journal of Pediatric Surgery to facilitate indexing and literature searching. Letters to the editor, we feel, are an important but underutilized method to report subjects that perhaps do not warrant full articles. We suspect that correspondence has a wide readership, and that the letters are often published rapidly, but the section needs to be properly indexed so that letter authors can be reasonably assured of proper future citation.'


Index as tattle-tale

'It hardly needs saying that Julian Barnes's Letters from London, a collection of his dispatches for the New Yorker, is worth £6.99 of anyone's money: the essays are as witty and wise as you'd expect. But an unanticipated bonus is the index—compiled, I assume, by the author.

In his introduction, Barnes mentions a couple of occasions when interviewees insisted on altering his copy: there was the unnamed political commentator who wished to be described as "seasoned" rather than "veteran", and the equally anonymous Lloyd's name who asked for the words "second home" to be changed to "cottage". Who are these sensitive characters? The index mischievously reveals all: "Bragg, Melvyn: owns cottage, xv; membership of Lloyd's, 232-235... Howard, Anthony: seasoned or veteran? xv, 332..." Better still are the incongruous and wonderfully surreal juxtapositions. The entry under "Animals", for instance, begins thus: "dream about hamsters, xv; Mrs Thatcher as she elephant, 5; Sir Anthony Myer, 5; Rector of Stiffkey's lion, 21: fur-bearing trout, 24; Nicholas Ridley as lizard, 35; Geoffrey Howe as rabbit, 51-52; Geoffrey Howe as Rottweiler in drag, 54; Geoffrey Howe as bee, 56; Michael Heseltine as hornet, 56; rats and Hampton Court Maze, 83-84; Churchill's British lion, 107; Labour policy on animals in transit, 112: Labour policy on blood sports, 134; Mister Major (horse), 136; Andrew Neil, 151... If Barnes were to write a novel consisting of nothing but a 200-page index, it would be a racing certainty for the Booker.'

Robert Thompson, Guardian, 19 April 1995

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Our warm thanks to the 34 contributors to this section: Jane Angus (Crathie), Ken Bakewell (Liverpool), Caroline Barlow (Kempston), Hazel Bell (Hatfield), Pat Booth (Spencer's Wood), J. H. Bowman (London), Philip Bradley (Dundee), Philip Found (Lincoln), Dorothy Frame (London), Auriol Griffith-Jones (Sturminster Newton), Jill Halliday (Pulham St Mary), Berry Harper (Seaford), William Heckscher (Princeton, NJ), Georgiana Henry (Mississippi Univ.), Barbara Hird (Cheltenham), Ann Hudson (Chichester), Elisabeth Ingham (London), Steven King (London), Susan Klement (Tucson, Ariz.), Cherry Lavel (London), Helen Litton (Dublin), Dick Luxner (Stow, Mass.), Jackie McDermott (Thorntonhill), Betty Moys (Badgers Mount), Sally Phillips (London), Felicity Pickup (Toronto), Christine Shuttleworth (London), Barbara Smith (Bognor), Mary Toase (London), John Vickers (Emsworth), Alice Walker (Augusta, Georgia), Elizabeth Wallis (Kew), Bella Weinberg (Jamaica, NY), Caroline Wilding (Knutsford).

Contributions of review extracts welcomed by Norman Hillyer (Charities, The Avenue, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 3AJ).

Closing dates 30 June and 30 November for the subsequent issues—the earlier, the kindlier.