INDEXES REVIEWED

edited by Christine Shuttleworth

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


'It has a list of sources and a good index.' [Index by SI member Christine Shuttleworth.]


'As is to be expected of the author, what we are given is an unpretentious, lucid, highly intelligent, and often witty survey of those years. At that level, the book is well-nigh perfect, the index matching the exposition in thoroughness and clarity.'


'The index is comprehensive and the cross-referencing is excellent.'


'There are comprehensive indexes by author, corporate body and subject.'


'The book’s usefulness is enhanced by music examples, a full bibliography and index.'


'You may not want to read this book from cover to cover, and the excellent index makes for easy use as a reference text.'


'... let me say at once that I don’t see how the job could have been better done. It is a most impressive achievement, and fully maintains the quite exemplary high standard adhered to by the first two volumes. Written with all the requisite tact (and a lot of tact is required), the ample, well-balanced text is supplemented by nearly 200 pages of extremely useful appendices and notes, which constitute an archive in themselves; plus a chronology, and a fifty-five page index which could not be improved on.'


'The index comes with a spiral-bound user manual that explains the installation procedure and the basic searching techniques. The user will find it relatively easy to navigate the Windows-based database and will appreciate the convenience of searching almost two centuries of the index of the House of Commons papers in one computerized database.'


'... very accessible to the reader, helped by good indexing and cross-referencing.'


'Throughout the book the text is supported by clear line diagrams and tables, the referencing is comprehensive and up-to-date and the index easy to use.'


'The discerning investor would need to look further than this book for a more critical evaluation of the development pipeline with respect to information on the potential market, time to market and potential for regulatory approval. This kind of information is never easy to obtain, although the book does provide a good index of where to look and what to look for.'


'The book is fully indexed (with indices [sic] of biblical references, ancient sources, modern authors, places and subjects), a feature which adds to its usefulness as a reference tool.'

'Each chapter concludes with a list of "readings," mostly newspaper, magazine, and trade journal articles; unfortunately, the lack of direct references to specific items makes it difficult to connect a claim with its source material. In contrast, the 14-page index is specific and complete.'


'The index includes many unusual words and technical terms, some of which are to be included in future editions of the OED.' [This would seem to be a new and useful function for indexes.]


'The volume is also impeccably cross-referenced and indexed.'


'A new work has appeared. The first volume of what eventually will be published in CD-ROM format... The projected CD-ROM will contain the catalog/index to the works in the bibliography. The use of a unique identifying number for each work's bibliographic citation, as well as for each item in the work's contents, will allow index entries to point directly to an entry in the bibliography. Projected index terms include composer, uniform title, instrumentation, thematic catalog numbers, original sources, editors, genres, and other information. Because of its high standards of documentation ... and the depth of indexing, this work will prove invaluable to anyone looking for music works.'


'Although the book is composed of duplicated sheets, it is good value for money and boasts an index: family historians in search of Kentish ancestors will be well served.'


'This meticulously ordered, heavily cross-referenced book encourages you to open it at random, read a little, chuck it down, iron a few shirts and start again anywhere other than the next page... The index - again, not something you'd find (or want) in your average work of fiction - comes in useful.' [This book - 'an Ezi-Access novel' - is described as the 'print remix' of a Web site which is an exercise in 'interactive storytelling', with a number of cross-references corresponding to Internet hyperlinks.]


'As with the first volume the indexing and notes are first class, as is the standard of production.' [See *The Indexer*, Vol. 20, no. 3, April 1997, p. 168, for praise of Vol 1 by the same reviewer.]


'Authentic Christianity contains an extensive index, which makes it a very useful reference book.'


'A glance at the superb indices [sic] reveals much to delight, for instance, anyone researching Adams, Clark, Cooke, Collins, Drywood, Fitch, Glascock, Green, Harris, King, Meade, Parker, Rich, Wiseman, Wood or Wythepoll.' [What more can one ask?]


'All in all, a provocative, intriguing and substantial paperback, with some good illustrations and a good index.'


'In addition to a standard index, there is also a separate index for the names of the biopolymer mixtures discussed in the book, to make it easier to search [for] specific mixtures.'


'Readers looking for the whole picture will need to follow up the cross-references and make frequent use of the excellent index.'


'You also get... some useful indices [sic] and appendices that weren't in the last edition.'


'A comprehensive index helps to make the publication suitable as a reference book of the area.'


'The set includes a generous amount of bibliography ... and very good indexes of proper names and subjects.'
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'A consecutive narrative is not appropriate or possible, but paging guided by the excellent index brings rewards.'


'The appendix that appeared in the first edition listing six categories of books that were related to items in the main catalogue, but distinct from them (such as books wrongly attributed to Catholics, and ghosts which appear in standard sources, but which apparently do not exist today), has been omitted. The number of appendices, however, has been increased to five - these consist of a chronological list, and indexes of printers and booksellers, of translators and editors, of persons and bodies to whom books were dedicated, and of other names mentioned in the text.' [Ghosts?]


'Several excellent indexes - general, name, and geographical - facilitate the use of the encyclopedia as a lookup tool.'


'A detailed subject index and 25 pages of about 600 references reflect an excellent summary.]


'Any useful academic text should include a comprehensive list of references and a usable index. Galloway and Hobday meet these criteria by citing some 1200 papers and books and providing an index extending to some five pages.'


'In addition to the copious chapter references the book has a 16-page bibliography, a name index and a subject index.'


'...it is carefully produced, with good illustrations and an exemplary index...' [Index by Shaun Dyas, the publisher.]


'All the artists and printmakers discussed in the book are helpfully indexed, as are the subjects of the prints, ranging from Abraham to Zedee via the Four Elements, the Five Senses, the Seven Liberal Arts (and the Seven Deadly Sins), the Eight (sic) Wonders of the World and the Nine Muses. [Index by SI member Christine Shuttleworth.]

Two cheers!


'The indexing is by source, subject, and key line; the subject index could be even more detailed.'


'Indexes are provided for the types of system most often needed by solicitors, and suppliers are listed under each type of product, with the very useful addition in the index of current number of client and cost per user system, although prices have not always been provided. ... The front contents page directs you to the supplier index as a starting point to the software providers.'


'The book's layout is excellent, and a subject index usefully groups the alphabetically arranged entries under general headings, but greater co-ordination is sometimes needed. "Abyssinian War" does not refer you to Hoare and the Hoare-Laval pact, or "Belgium, relations with" to the 1831 Treaty of London.'


'The original edition, for financial reasons, lacked an index, and the new edition includes a greatly expanded version of the index to the Protestation returns published by the Family History Society in 1993... the index, though apparently full and accurate, is cumbersomely arranged and frustrating to use, since it leads not to a page number but to a list of abbreviated place names - though in fairness, the editor explains that the format was imposed by the necessity of adapting the Family History Society's index rather than working ab initio.'


'The book's technical quality is high. ... The index is separated into name and subject sections. The former is a comprehensive listing of citations whose full bibliographic description is found at the end of each paper. The latter contains some quaint references, for example, "electronic mail, see computer-mediated communication (CMC)." It also highlights some of the jargon that permeates the text: "criticality resonance," "quality circles," and "parallel organizations," are just a few unfortunate examples.'

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The Indexer. Vol. 21 No. 1. April 1998

'It has the advantage of not just one index, but two, by names and by institutions and offices of administration. It could, however, have an index as comprehensive as that in Bernay's book [Queensland politics during sixty years 1859-1919], covering more general issues.'


'For an edited book, in which the chapters are all standing-alone, the index is more than adequate.'


'An appendix tabulates all the 500 biostratigraphical reference sites by country and there is an index of site names. However an ordinary index is omitted, causing frustration at times.'

INDEXES REVIEWED


'Separate name and subject indexes are provided at the back of the book [where else?]. The subject index is not as well constructed as it might be, which is the most obvious flaw in an otherwise well-designed volume.'


'The indexes are woefully inadequate.'


'A novel scheme for indexing links the author's name in the index not to page numbers, but to numbers in the text near citations or quotations. Apparently this is to narrow the search up "differentiation within association" or to find the single page entry on which "liminality" is found? I rushed to check the intriguing index entry "jeeping while giving", only to find in the text the somewhat less enigmatic "keeping while giving". If any index-users fix upon "Kilmarnock type arrowheads" or "Petit-ranchet [sic] derivative" and seek enlightenment from the text, they will be disappointed.' [Reviewer's "sic ".]


'Nearly twice as expensive and with less than half as long as the Yale Companion [to Jewish writing and thought in German culture, 1096-1996, ed. by Sander L. Gilman and Jack Zipes, £35], the Sagarra and Skrine volume plods along well-worn paths, padded out with a humdrum biographical index of authors which takes up a third of the book.' [It is rare to find an index censured for being too comprehensive.]


'Shamelessly overpriced and with an index printed in type so microscopic as to cause eyestrain, it seems unlikely to attract new readers to a figure whose period flavour, sadly, grows ever more distinct.'


'Judith Cook's biography is straightforward to a fault, and poorly proof-read and indexed.'


'The index lists individuals and companies and some titles. "Little Blue Books" points the user to the entry on Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. Unfortunately, broader subjects are not listed; there is no way, for example, to find all the religious publishers.'


'There are a couple of curious errors in the book. Sir Charles Sherrington was a physiologist, not a neurologist; and the physician Richard Asher, who first described and named Munchausen's syndrome, appears here - not once, but several times, and in the index also - as Richard Alter. How is such a mistake made? It suggests quotation at second or even third hand.'


'And yet, he goes on, this same audience has had its ears opened by the music of Górecki and Tavener. (The book has a bit of a tussle with the latter name — the index perplexedly flags up John Taverners nos 1 and 2, which looks like a desperate ploy to reconcile correct and incorrect spellings of the modern Taverner on two successive pages.)'

'However, sadly, there is a very scant index: no titles, no subjects, no places, and even the names are incomplete. Production of edited volumes is always difficult, but 700 pages of such wonderful content deserves much better.'


'The back matter includes an eight-page cited author index, a seven-page subject index, and fourteen pages of information (including e-mail addresses) about the chapter authors. ... The subject index contains the usual, difficult to detect lacunae, both at the page and entry levels. For example, a major insight about the future of cybernetics on page 29 is not one of the four pages listed after the entry for cybernetics in the subject index. The absence of an entry for a chapter subheading on "Loss of Novelty" (I checked under both L and N) is a problem of entry-level lacunae. Unevenness of indexing is another problem. "Proprietary fame" is indexed, but not its complement, "performance fame." Another key concept, "patron swapping," is not indexed. Its meaning is not naughty, so it does not pose a threat to decency, regardless of what the acknowledged legislators of the real world may assert.'


'I deprecate the absence of scale bars and co-ordinates from many figures, and the index is less than comprehensive. These are quibbles...'


'The subject index, though thorough, is often too broad to be convenient. There are approximately 355 entries under "Acting," with no further analysis, making for a lot of flipping back and forth. There is a separate section on acting in the text, and it would have been helpful if, at a minimum, this section had been highlighted among the 355 entries.'


'... however, the reader should be prepared not to rely on the index. The first thing I attempted to look up on receiving the book was "nitric oxide" and was disconcerted to find instead "nitrous oxide" and "nitrous oxide synthase" (some of the chapter texts were also incorrect [...]). There are also many other inconsistencies, omissions and poor cross referencing (e.g. according to the index, adrenoreceptors are only mentioned on p. 211 — difficult to believe in a book on the ANS!).

Furthermore, despite the fact that some authors have made it clear that they are describing a particular species and have written quite substantial accounts, such as the description by Clarke on the control of anterior pituitary function in the sheep, there is no mention of sheep or ovine in the index. I have managed to find a paragraph on the pig pancreas, but neither "pig" nor "pancreas" are [sic] listed.'


'This book would be an asset to any science library. For scientists who have the time to read it and the stamina to carry it back to their offices, there is much to be learned and enjoyed. They may be disappointed that the index does not do justice to the richness of the text and that the editors do not provide a coherent summary in their otherwise admirable introduction.'


"One minor quibble is the index, which could have been more extensive to enable easier cross-referencing between chapters." [minor?]


'Finally, the unorthodox 43-page index, which is really seven separate, but poorly delineated, indexes, appears to be a disappointing afterthought to an otherwise thoughtful construction of words, pictures, and ideas.'


'The index was not very clear, and it was difficult to find what you wanted.'


'I should have preferred to see fewer proof-reading errors and confused citations, and a better standard of indexing. For example, poor old Andrews and Dury (creators of the 1773 map of Wiltshire) appear in four different spellings in the course of one paper, and the only index entries for the Mount at Glastonbury, and the Ridgeway, are under "The".'


'The authors provide a fairly comprehensive list of Russian papers, ... as well as the names and addresses of active workers in the former U.S.S.R. There is also information on obtaining translated papers by e-mail. In contrast to this exuberant helpfulness, however, the index is breathtakingly (and almost uselessly) brief.'
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'A much more extended index would have been useful.'


'Kate Tiller makes excellent illustrative use of particular places and sets of documents, even if these are somewhat tilted serious criticism—whether of the author or the publisher, I don't know—of the index which manages to leave out most of the technical terms referred to in the text, e.g., family restoration, mere stones and oyer & terminer, and of the too numerous misprints (minister for minister, aditor for editor and—a nice one this)—goal delivery for gaol delivery.'


'A serious concern is the inadequacy of the index. In a work of such value and detail, there is a need for easy access to the desired information. This is not possible here. For example, ohmic heating is referred to in the text but not in the index. Similarly, if information is sought on the browning of fruit, a common problem in fruit handling and processing, it is necessary to be aware that this problem is associated with phenolic compounds and polyphenoloxidase before the subject can be located in the text via the index. Much searching will sometimes be necessary to arrive at the desired information.'


'... the book has the usual endpieces, with a frustratingly cursory index.'


'Lang's indexing is no less confusing and irresponsible [than his editing]. While he distinguishes letters, "mentioning" of personages and footnotes in his index, he regularly confuses them. One cannot understand, either, why major references are often left unindexed, for instance to Keats, Milton, Byron and Wordsworth to name a few. But Lang's most egregious errors are the false entries in his index. I cannot find Thomas Carlyle, indexed by Lang as being referenced on page 134, I, and footnoted on 135, I, or Alfred Tennyson, indexed as being referenced on page 214 of Volume Two; and I cannot find A.P. Stanley, indexed as being referenced on page 199 of Volume One. These, and many others, do not exist. Yet, Lang indexes them. Such carelessness is the more shocking in an editor who prides himself on the thoroughness of his work.'


'It is to be hoped that the catalogue of the exhibition which Calloway is mounting at the museum in October, to mark the centenary of Beardsley's death, will contain a full scholarly apparatus, not only footnotes but full provenance and exhibition history for all works on view. The index in his present book is worse than useless.'


'In writing of the social sphere to which, as an international prima donna, she had access, Sutherland is equally reserved. "At the house of Noel Coward we met Charlie Chaplin and his wife Oona." (Neither, incidentally, listed in the index, unlike the Duchess of Windsor, who is.)'


'The book\'s index is not very helpful; I searched in vain for key sites of the Great War — Ypres, the Dardanelles, Tournai, Macedonia — even though all of these places figure in many of the works Cork discusses and are mentioned by him in the text. (Someone should also tell the indexer and proofreader that "Slevogt, Max" cannot follow "Soby, James Thrall.") But it is obvious that I am searching for flaws in a work that will, henceforth, be the starting point for any study of the art of the Great War.' [All the more reason to search for flaws, surely?]

Indexes omitted


'The book is presented in 26 chapters with a chapter allocated to each of the following food poisoning organisms... which are laid out in a standard format, constitute the major part of the book, and the authors take the view that because of the consistent structure of the chapters, an index is not necessary.'


'These [photographs] might well be of importance beyond their immediate area, but without an index (or even a list of contents), how is one to find them? A fun collection, but more forethought could have made it a more useful publication.'


'The book is well edited (but the absence of an index means that anyone searching for all contributions, for example, on business plans, is disadvantaged)...'


'... for a young child. After a while the book got a little repetitive.... It would be better if the book had a glossary and index.'
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'The collection would have been enhanced by an index of terms and authors, since several of the essays address the same concepts and sources.'


'None of these three books has an index, sure sign that their publishers think them ephemeral. In the Critchley-Halcrow case, that is undeserved. In the other two, it is not.' *The other two books reviewed were Blair's Hundred Days by Derek Draper (Faber, £7.99), and Were you still up for Portillo? by Brian Cathcart (Penguin, £5.99) - name them and shame them.*


'There are copious cross-references, but still no index.'


'...lacks an index, though there are cross-references throughout the text.'


'In a book so packed with personalities, theological concepts and historical events the absence of an index is also disappointing, not merely regrettable but also incomprehensible. I hope Oddie will rectify so obvious an omission in future editions.'


'Here is a book that, without an index and with incoherent interruptions from Berenson, the benighted Job and Doris Lessing (this last perhaps an editor's mistake for Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, who is marginally relevant to the Brookner theme), deserves recognition as a great work of art history...' Rev. by Steven Poole, *Guardian*, 20 Nov 1997.

'A warning: there is no index.'


'The guide is arranged alphabetically by country with the reports on the Council of Europe and the OECD towards the end. No index has been included but the contents pages are sufficient in guiding the reader to the required section.'


'The lack of indices [sic] is disappointing but, given that this book is not designed as a scholar's tool, this is understandable.' *So it is only scholars who need indexes?*


'...there is no index, which is not actually too much of a problem (because the book is very carefully structured), but it does seem a bit stingy in a book the price of which is as unrivalled as its content.' *[A bit stingy? I should say so.]*


'Severin's writing is fluent and entertaining, but it suffers from the lack of an index.'

**Peter Owen: My dearest Minette, by Ruth Norrington (239 pp, £22.50). Rev. by Hardy Amies, *Spectator*, 6 Dec 1997.**

'Minette, the youngest daughter of Charles I and Henrietta Maria,... wrote [to her brother, the future Charles II] in French, he in English. It would have been sophisticated to have reproduced at least a few of her letters in French, but that is asking too much from a book which does not even give us an index.'


'Picador are to be congratulated for their series of travel classics, of which this is one, but an index and a short biographical introduction would make them even more valuable.'


'There is, though, no index, which is a shameful, cheese-paring economy.'


'The weak bibliography and lack of an index compromise an otherwise exciting work.'


'In a book on this subject the absence of an index is puzzling indeed. It would have added so much to its usefulness.'


'...I often lost track of who was where. The list of the exhibition members at the front of the book was a big help, but I found myself wishing that there had also been an index.'


'...the book... is broken up into dozens of categories but has no index.'
Obiter dicta


'They get their come-uppance who deserve it.... Gore Vidal is a pin-striped poseur, while Arthur Schlesinger is down as the "toadying biographer" of the Kennedys. The index has an entry, "Anus, Kingsley."


'Famously, [Huntford’s] index [to an earlier book, *Scott and Amundsen*] listed twenty-three characteristics of Scott, of which only “literary gifts” and perhaps “agnosticism” were positive. “Command, unsuitability for” was followed by “insight, lack of” and “judgement, defective” in dire and finally hilarious sequence.'


'Sharing the Clarkly zeal for female company, Colin was sexually frustrated, like most of our generation, by the moral climate of the 1950s. However, he has since recouped in a style which could, one suspects, boost his index with as many girls’ names as his immodest brother’s.' [Colin Clark is the younger brother of the politician Alan Clark, and son of Kenneth Clark (‘Lord Clark of Civilization’).]


'It is often not obvious why books fall into the former category ['invaluable']; ease of use, logical layout of topics and information so that data may be found without recourse to the index may all count, or it may just be personal response.'

'In the various stages in the preparation of the book for printing, I encountered all those parts of the Folio process with almost unfailing pleasure. Such care and attention to detail were lavished throughout, at textual editing, proof reading, the selection of illustrations..., on maps, on page and cover design. I was even allowed to make my own index...'

(Letter to members of the Folio Society from T.G.H. James, author of the 1997 presentation volume, *Egypt revealed.*)

'Los Angeles A to Z: an encyclopedia of the city and county by Leonard Pitt and Dale Pitt, the one a historian, the other a freelance writer and “indexer”, is an inadequate response, misguided by political correctness, to what the authors perceived as a gap in the market’ (Ben Stein, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 Oct 1997). [Why ‘indexer’ in quotes, Mr Stein?]

'And nonfiction is being stripped of its least viewer-friendly features. Notes, for example, are in trouble even at the academic presses. “Our marketing department tells us that footnotes scare off people,” says an editor at Harvard... On the other hand, it’s strange to see nonfiction books with no index, as if that elementary guide might also “scare off” readers: Walter Cronkite’s and David Brångley’s memoirs (Knopf) are index-free, as is Jane Kramer’s book on modern Germany, *The Politics of Memory* (Random House).’ (‘The crushing power of big publishing’, by Mark Crispin Miller, *The Nation*, 17 Mar 1997).

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