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, under the sections: Indexes praised; Two cheers!; Indexes censured; Indexes omitted; Obiter dicta.

Indexes praised


The sheer complexity of the subject could have been a barrier to using this book but there are three clear routes available. First, by looking up the country (for major missions); second, by the name of the mission under the UN designation; third, by accessing the comprehensive and cross-referenced index.


There is also an alphabetical list of entries, brief notes on the contributors, a thoughtful essay on the art of archaeological biography, a helpful glossary, a full subject index, and more than 100 illustrations (some not of the highest quality).


Many of the reviews are extremely well written, with typographical errors kept to a minimum, and include high-quality illustrations and a contents list and an index that seems to be both accurate and comprehensive.


The work is well indexed and desired subject matter is easily found.


There is also a useful list of main gateway Web sites for voluntary organisations, adequate index and biographical information about the contributors.

Berkeley: For the love of books, by Ronald B. Shwartz (297 pp, $13). Rev. in Common Reader Catalog no. 194.

The index alone is a joy to browse.


On the plus side, each chapter is preceded by a list of all its headings and subheadings, which I found very helpful for navigating the book. There is also a useful index at the end.


Indexing is comprehensive and logical and it is generally easy to find one’s way around it.


Each chapter includes an extensive list of references and there is a well-constructed index to the whole volume.


The text comprises 429 pages of text plus contents and index, and is well produced and printed. At what I consider a modest price for such a specialist book, it must represent excellent value for money.


. . . its great value is in its wonderful referencing, indexing and presentation. [Index by SI member Moira Greenhalgh.]


In short, this is a reference work to treasure. It is laid out in six parts, ninety chapters and a substantial chronology (I must also commend the really useful index). . .


Two pages of the excellent index are devoted to libraries, but many librarians and library historians may well want to read further, appreciating the expert analysis and immaculate documentation of a wide range of what is often unpublished evidence.


A further volume in this remarkable series . . . As ever, a very high standard of editing and publishing has been maintained, the letters supported by meticulous textual apparatus, together with appendices, a biographical register, bibliography, index to correspondence and a most detailed index [compiled by SI member Jean Macqueen].


The index should be used to find hidden entries: Finchale Priory in Bearepaire, and Levens in Sizergh; while hidden chapters on John Lewyn (3) or medieval households (13) may easily be missed on superficial inspection.
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Some two-thirds of the surviving letters appear, grouped chronologically with biographical commentary (skimpy but adequate), annotation and an excellent index.

Rev. by Anthony Pryer, Times Literary Supplement, 22 Sept. 2000. Mozart had no consistent pattern of spelling, so Spaethling has deliberately misspelled the English equivalents (but not, thank God, in the index).

Rev. by Michael Kennedy, Sunday Telegraph, 1 Oct. 2000. This is a splendid volume and its value is enhanced by a marvellous index.


Less a biography than a reader’s guide, Raymond Roussel and the republic of dreams could be described as an academic book were it not so stylishly written and quirkily constructed. (I must add that the scholarly bibliography and the excellent index are not quirkily at all.) [Index by SI member Hazel Bell.]


A straightforward alphabetical arrangement is used and material is easily accessible both from the cross-references and the detailed index.


The index of Patrick Jephson’s ‘intimate account’ of life in the service of Diana, Princess of Wales is a thought-provoking read – if you just skip through to the Ds and let your eyes rest on the entries below ‘Diana’. ‘Artistic temperament’ sits next to ‘brutal pragmatism’ and ‘power to heal’ nestles snugly between ‘photo shoots’ and ‘prolific note-writer’. ‘Moods’ scores seven page references, one more than ‘vulnerability’, but her ‘spiritual hunger’, ‘paranoia’ and ‘clothing allowance’ get equal billing . . .

Was ever the alphabet so aptly applied? Her compassion may get 17 mentions, but the indexer’s methodical hand removes the halo as swiftly as it is given, placing ‘cynical exploitation’ – four references – bang next door . . .

To some, she will always be the Madonna of the Smudged Mascara – the Establishment’s victim and martyr as offered up on Panorama. To others, she remains the destructive epitome of a rock star who liked to be seen in black leather . . .

Give me an honest hatchet job – or an indexer’s cool list of abstract nouns . . . anything rather than this cod-sympathetic squeal.


Geared more for the beginning and intermediate birder, Mr Kaufman’s book is compact and uniquely user-friendly, with handy indexes and color-keyed tabs for easy reference . . .


There is a useful glossary and the book is comprehensively indexed.


The book is also well indexed.


It works very well, making the book suitable for both cover to cover reading and as a reference tool (its role here enhanced by a comprehensive index).


The subject index is extensive.


Its index and star rating . . . will provide useful shortcuts for harassed parents.


The book is well-illustrated and indexed.


The second version (2.00) of Dewey for Windows incorporates a number of improvements to its two predecessors (DfW and Electronic Dewey) . . . The index incorporates a greater number of built classmarks than previously.


Most of the papers, derived from both large- and small-scale work, are solidly based on the most recent research, some unpublished. This together with a useful index and extensive notes and references to each paper, make it an important statement of existing knowledge and thought, and a vital basis of future research.


His exhaustive appendices, notes, bibliography, and index take up almost a third of the text, and with these pages he has given scholars of African-American history and those interested in the events of the 1950s and 1960s a much needed and heretofore lacking archive.


There is an excellent index.


I don’t have the heart to tell them I found it a bit jumbled, with each of them anonymously responsible for alternate chunks, but there’s a useful index should we have forgotten anything about the doomed union of a rock star who liked to be seen in black leather trousers and once wrote a song called Suicide Blonde . . . and a rock
chick who just liked to be seen, now also dead. There’s ‘Hutchence, Michael, attraction to women, depression, drug use’, and there’s ‘Yates, Paula, pursuit of Michael, difficulties over children, suicide attempt’.


Gang of Five is a valuable resource. It is certainly the best account by a mainstream reporter of the conservative activists who drove the ideological battles of the 1990s. . . . The book’s crammed index – no doubt hot summer reading among inside-the-beltway conservatives – will be especially helpful to members of the ‘What is Kristol [Bill – editor of the *Weekly Standard*] thinking?’ club.


Competent author and subject indexes enable the user to navigate with ease.


It is easy to access because of good referencing and indexing and generally it is very easy to read.


Good bibliographies and a clear index all help to make this a stimulating and absorbing read for all libraries and students interested in developing reading and the imagination – not just children’s reading but adults as well.


Looking up the film references alone in the ‘Index of Persons and Titles of Works’ is an apt reminder of the astonishing feat of scholarly archaeology performed by Peter Michael Braunworth and his colleagues, all old hands at Schnitzler philology. Their listings of dates as well as brief facts about family and profession for most of the 8,740 persons in the ‘General Index’ also included in the final volume of the Tagebuch make many connections in Schnitzler’s life and work visible for the first time. Those names which remain unidentified, among them one Irma, two Minnas and three Mizis, say so much about both Schnitzler’s habits and the mores of the era that they could be part of the text. The General Index also holds some unexpected pleasures in store. Did Schnitzler read Kafka? In Hohenschwangau, of all places, where he stayed while touring he called the ‘regal kitsch’ of Neuschwanstein, he records reading Kafka’s very different Castle on the evenings of August 19 and 21, 1928; on each of the following mornings he begins his journal entry with the text of a dream. Schnitzler dreaming of Kafka? Psychoanalysts will want to read carefully.


The book . . . is superbly indexed, and once Bardakjian’s transliteration scheme is mastered, there are no problems locating pertinent data.


There is no Fairlie to be found in the excellent index because he is not in the text. [*Fair enough.*]


What also marks this volume as an important resource is that it contains indexes to all the excavations reported on since 1969 by year, location and type (compiled by Eoin Bairéad). Excellent value at £15.

**Two cheers!**


Although the publishers, Fayard, have gone to great pains to print material and notes, together with a bibliography and a comprehensive index, the author has been ill-served by them. If this is to be a work of reference, the reader needs to be able to relate the rooms listed and numbered in the text with the plans provided. . . . Some, but not all, of the plans have been adapted to Newton’s numbering.


In an informal test of Nelson’s completeness, I have, over the past few weeks, searched through it for whatever relatively esoteric topics have come randomly to mind. I found index listings and informative descriptions of familial Mediterranean fever and hypokalemic periodic paralysis. Vocal cord dysfunction was not in the index but was featured appropriately under the differential diagnosis of asthma. I found no listing of the ‘BAER test’, but it was indeed there, under ‘brain stem evoked response, auditory.’ In fact, I found everything I looked for, with the single exception of ‘mucositis.’ So, by my criterion of being encyclopedic, the new Nelson passes with flying colors.


The index is significantly improved from the first edition, which had numerous errors of omission and commission. Despite the 138 index pages, some listings remain elusive, however. In this respect, the CD version has some advantages. The text version had no listing for cri du chat syndrome, while the computer search was immediately successful.


The utility is enhanced by three indexes – arranged by author, geography and subject. For the most part, these were thorough. However, the omission of certain terms which are contained in the citations – such as ‘men’ and ‘masculinity’ – was disappointing. The geographical index illustrates the extent to which the volume is dominated by American entries, although there are numerous UK and German citations.


Three pages out of 66 are devoted to useful subject and author indexes, although there is an unhelpful (joke?) reference to ‘chain indexing’.

Unlike its predecessor, this volume does at least have an index, but this still fails to do justice to the information content of the text, and could have been usefully supplemented by a glossary.

Indexes censured


One final grumble. Like too many recent works, neither of these two books has an adequate index. Kuijert offers a list of persons referred to in the text ‘To make passages easier to find!’ Since footnotes are deliberately eschewed (the blurb makes a virtue of this) and many of the references are mere allusions, this is totally valueless. Vermes provides no index at all.


Given the wealth of information provided in the two volumes of this textbook, the index could also be improved. For example, pyogenic granuloma is listed not under ‘pyogenic granuloma’ but rather under ‘granuloma, pyogenic’ and the infrequently used term ‘granuloma pyogenicum’.


And more patience is required for subject searching, to compensate for the massive index, which for example makes only one reference to segregated ‘migration’ ice and 4 more to permafrost that is useless, indeed place-names are virtually absent so making local historians gnash their teeth in rage.


The index is not fully comprehensive and is sometimes quirky – BSE is not listed and again, I thought it was not covered until I looked for the full title of the disease (which is seldom used in conversation).


For an important work of reference this otherwise excellent book has one serious flaw. It has the worst Index I have seen in a for an important work of reference this otherwise excellent book has one serious flaw. It has the worst Index I have seen in a


This is a valuable addition to the literature of reference. If there is to be a criticism, it must be of the indexing, which is confused and often misleading. There is nothing here like the keyword index of the Oxford [Dictionary of Quotations], and tracking down a half-remembered quotation is a laborious endeavour. Indeed, exhaustive investigation has so far failed to turn up one of the most famous military quotations of all – Samuel Johnson’s remark that everyone thinks meanly of himself for not having been a soldier, or for not having been at sea. In the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations it is necessary only to find ‘soldier’ in the index.


The contributions are quite up to date and are augmented by a subject index . . . The publisher is also at fault for not furnishing an exhaustively developed and cross-referenced subject index that would allow the book to serve as a more valuable and lasting resource.


I have only one complaint: the index is so patchy as to be almost useless, indeed place-names are virtually absent so making local historians gnash their teeth in rage.


A long index at the end promises that everything in dermatopathology can be found there. You will discover some things (that I never use for my work) like Winterbottom’s sign, wattle, Woolf’s syndrome, Harder’s spot, Kerandel’s sign, IBIDS syndrome or IFAP syndrome and also IFAO syndrome (indexed for page 288–289, but I couldn’t find it. IFAO = AFIP?) You will not find terms employed in our daily practice, such as cornoid lamella, corps rond, grains, comedo, parakeratosis, Kamino bodies, Clark’s level, Breslow index. None of them are indexed. Readers should be assured, however, that all of these terms are mentioned in the text.


Barnhill . . . compiled a comprehensive index, but missing from it are notations to folliculocentric basloid proliferation; the Haarscheibe, or hair disc; and Woringer-Kolopp disease, to mention but three examples.

Although these comments may seem harsh, they are written with empathy for the author and particularly in the hope that he will find them salutary during the preparation of the second edition of his book. [We share that hope.]


This first edition of the Oxford Handbook of Tropical Medicine contains a table of contents, a foreword by David Heymann, a comprehensive list of abbreviations, 18 chapters, including an introduction, important contact addresses for various organizations, an index, and approximately 30 tables, 125 figures, and 200 boxes. . . . Interestingly, two of the index references to hookworms lead to the chapter on gastroenterology, although there appear to be no references to hookworms in the indicated subsection, which focuses on ascariasis. This is probably an isolated problem, since no other similar problems were encountered.

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The footnotes in general are exemplary and learned: one could cobble together a good course in 19th-century fiction by just reading the notes and citations at the bottom of the page. The index, alas, is less useful, since it contains none of the theoretical terms Trotter is at such pains to deploy. One searches in vain for ‘waste’, ‘mess’, ‘trash’, ‘disgust’, and ‘rummaging’, not to mention ‘metonymy’, ‘metaphor’ and ‘premature historisation’, all of which are regularly repeated and combined in the text. This is an odd flaw for a book that aims to be a contribution to the theoretical conversation, and it becomes important when the reader tries to look backward, through the richness of examples, to find the conceptual structure. Yet this absence, too, is perhaps indicative.

Although Trotter’s book is marked by an unusual zeal to tidy and to order into ‘mess-theory’ the ‘mess’ he is describing (in this chapter, I have tried to suggest . . . ‘in the chapters that follow, I take these issues further . . . ’, the aim of this chapter, and of chapters 7 and 8’), that task is precisely the one he cannot perform or mess what he says it is. The absence of a conceptual index, the presence there only of the names of authors and their works, is perhaps the sign of the ultimate triumph of ‘mess’ over ‘mess-theory’. Whether or not he compiled the index himself — authors often don’t — the index is, as its name implies, a sign. But perhaps, despite his theoretical gestures to the contrary, this tidy ‘mess’ — a ‘good mess’ — is exactly what Trotter had in mind.


. . . sewers are absent from the (inadequate) index.


More serious concerns come up regarding the index. Of the nine page references given for the index in halakha (Jewish traditional oral law), four turn out to be dead ends. Of the remaining five, the text spells one halakha and another halakhah. Those curious about the Borscht Belt in the Catskills would have to happen onto the Sid Caesar article for its brief mention of it, in the absence of indexing under either subject. And New York’s Lubavitcher sect seems to have been overlooked entirely. It’s nice to see in the text listing that ‘Chaim Gross of the index is in fact Chaim Gross — we can forgive the occasional transposition — but one suspects that this work received no more than one stage of copy editing.


As a reference text, I thought the style could be more user-friendly, with more use of sub-sections, diagrams, detailed cross-referencing between chapters and an improved index. . . . The index could be more detailed to allow easier use as a ‘dip into’ reference text. For example, validation, UKAS/NAMAS, quality control and quality review are not listed in the index.


Indeed, overall, Allen seems to have lacked the editorial guidance one might expect from a university press . . . . There is a meagre bibliography of eleven items . . . and a curious ‘Index of First Lines’, which inexplicably gives the quatrain beginning ‘And hollow breasts encircling hearts of flame’ as the opening verses of Tennyson’s ‘Palace of Art’. These errors are to be regretted, for the book has much of interest.


There are four indexes in all, preceded by some brief explanatory notes. These notes do not include an explanation of the use of underlining used in the indexes. A dual referencing system is used that gives the page number and identifies the manufacturer [of the products] by use of a code. I did not find this code useful at all. The three main indexes are headed ‘Methods, materials, techniques and instruments’, ‘Analyses, parameters, other targets of the analyses, competitors and interferences’ and ‘Products and environments analysed matrixes’. On the whole I found this separation of topics to be cumbersome and frequently tried the wrong index first.

There are a number of omissions, for example there is no general entry for toxins followed by a list of toxins covered, which would have been useful. I looked up mass spectrometry but could only find an entry under ‘gas chromatography with mass spectrometry’. I also looked up ‘Diarrhoeic Shellfish Poison (DSP)’ but could find no entry, even though I know it is toxic. I would have been able to find it!


Two flaws in the book are an incomplete index and a system of annotation which makes it hard to check the references.


It is a pity that there is no proper index or easy way to access information in this short guide quickly.


The only blot is a disgracefully negligent index. In a book of this size and this value, one needs a bit of help, but Viking has produced an index which is useless, just a list of page numbers. The name of Dorothy Wordsworth is followed by nearly 400 page numbers, but if you want to know anything in particular, you will have to fish around helplessly. I hope, before the paperback, Viking does one of our best biographers proud by producing a book worthy of a remarkable book.

Indexes omitted


The only weakness in this excellently written and well-researched book is that there are no index and no illustrations.


The lack of an index is a regrettable dereliction of duty on the part of the publishers in a book of this multi-thematic and many-personed nature.


A prevailing tone of withering contempt (‘To every fool is given his morsel of wisdom’) and the absence of index, bibliography or footnotes tells us that Walden sees his efforts as essayistic.


However the sheer number of pages makes the publication impenetrable to the casual reader, and a keyword index would have been helpful. [Casual reader?]
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Without index, reference, footnote or bibliography, fact and guesswork are indistinguishable.


The appearance of the report, its layout and choice of font, coupled with the absence of an index and dearth of images, may seem strange but this should almost certainly be explained in terms of ensuring its accessibility to partially sighted and blind people – no double standards here. [A somewhat enigmatic remark.]


He has done his hussar-hero proud. Only an index would have made it better.


. . . beautifully produced on glossy paper in the style of a tourist guide . . . with cutaway diagrams and fact boxes (though no index, rather irritatingly).


This is an agreeable, well-meaning book, an undemanding introduction to the country, though it is short on sport and culture, and should have been supplied with an index.


Stet is an autobiographical memoir by a publisher about publishing. So it seems a pity that Diana Athill hasn’t got her publisher to provide an index, though she does insist that publishers worry a lot about costs, and that indexes cost money. Still, autobiography is a kind of gossip, and, according to Athill, gossip is nothing to be ashamed of: ‘in its highest and purest form [it is] a passionate interest, lit by humour but above malice, in human behaviour.’ So the desire for an index of names is above prurience and quite respectable.


Because the [catalogue] is so meaty, an index would have been helpful, and may I suggest more places to sit and read?


The Diaries are nevertheless probably of less interest to libel lawyers – or to nervous inquirers cursing the absence of an index – than as a record of a period already taking on some of the distance and strangeness of history.


With nifty cunning he’s omitted an index, so friend, foe, all the ‘sweeties’ he’s worked with, have little hope of a quick peep in the bookshop. They’ll have to buy Diaries 1969–77 to discover the worst.


His useful book is marred only by lack of a bibliography and index.


A select bibliography and a list of abbreviations are included but no index, which is a pity when one considers that the report emanates from a Department of Information and Communication.


This volume would be improved by three things – an index, an attractive cover, and the sense of popularizing or widening this important issue to a non-specialist readership.


It was fun and fascinating to read through this chronology, encountering many familiar and more unfamiliar names. I found the descriptions worthwhile, for they often gave the major contributions of the various individuals, including years of publication. It would certainly be beyond the scope of such a work to include references for the various contributions to the literature made by the hundreds of authors mentioned. But I was hoping, as I flipped to the back, to find an index.

That there is no index is a major shortcoming. It was interesting and educational to read along, progressing chronologically through the years. But most of us, I’d submit, if we want to look up a historical medical personage, begin with a name and not a date.

The other major book of this sort in my library, The New York Public Library Book of Chronologies, devotes 64 pages to chronologies of science, including medicine. It has a nine-page index with more than 2900 names, not just of scientists, of course. I hope that for a second edition of Dates in Medicine, an index will be included. I’m sure it would increase this good book’s usefulness, and I suspect it would probably increase its marketability as well.


In Defence of T. S. Eliot, [Raine’s] second haul of literary essays, comes without any contextualising intro (or outro, for that matter: no index, no notes about where the pieces first appeared); this brusque lack of preliminaries suggests that the talents exercised here need no introduction.


I am sorry that the editors and/or publishers do not seem to share my high opinion of the value of the contributions, since they have not seen fit to provide an index to facilitate the retrieval of the information provided.

Obiter dicta


Such were the power and provocation of Hegel’s doctrines that they have generated commentaries which are themselves classics of philosophic discourse. Not one of these figures either in the bibliography or index. It was as if the famous readings by Kojève, by Lukács and others simply did not exist. Is this some obscure academic jest?


Jeffrey Archer’s new book of short stories ranges from the fatuous to the grotesque . . . Most of the pieces are warmed-over anecdotes,
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helpfully marked with asterisks in the index . . . [Could the reviewer be referring to the table of contents?]

O'Reilly & Associates Inc: Hydrocephalus: a guide for patients, families, and friends, by Chuck Toporek and Kellie Robinson (1999, 355 pp, $19.95). Rev. by Enid Gilbert-Barness, Archive of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine 154(9), Sept. 2000. The appendix includes 5 sections: (1) a list of neurosurgeons who specialize in treatment of hydrocephalus, (2) a list of medical libraries and journals, (3) suggested reading, (4) Internet services, and (5) a glossary of terms, followed by an up-to-date important bibliography and index. [The index is in the appendix?]

Knights unindexed

There are oodles of knights in this work [Malory's Morte d'Arthur]: no fewer than 110 search the wounds of Sir Urré in book 19 chapter 11, including Sir Menaduke, Sir Sagramore le Desirous, Sir Dodinas le Savage, Sir Alisandor le Orphelin and Sir Bellengerous le Orgulous. As you'd expect, Sir Selises of the Dolorous Tower has sobbed his way into the gathering too, alongside Sir Lamiel of Cardiff, 'that was a great lover'. Since Malory was too mean to pay for an index, I cannot be sure that this list is complete. Smallweed, The Guardian, 16 Sept. 2000

Phillis report

Tim Yeo, the Tory spokesman, made a stirring and heartfelt apology. ‘I apologise to the families of those who have suffered bereavement, and to those who are still struggling with a terrible illness.’ Very apposite, except why was Mr Yeo apologising? And for what? He wasn’t even there. He isn’t even mentioned in the [Phillips report’s] index (unlike, say, John Gummer: 27 times, and Stephen Dorrell: seven times) . . . .

John Major (four mentions in the index) rose to exculpate everyone . . . . [The reference is to the Phillips Report on BSE, for which the Society of Indexers provided several indexers.]


He’s lost his charm

Richard Holbrooke, in his book on how the war in Bosnia was ended, spoke eloquently of Mr Milosevic’s charm; a subject which in a subsequent edition was mysteriously not referred to in the index, Mr Milosevic by then having become distinctly less charming for Western policymakers. Editorial, Spectator, 7 Oct. 2000

Acknowledgements

Our warm thanks to the 23 contributors to this section:

Jane Angus (Ballater)
Dorothy P. Bailey (Tenby)
Ken Bakewell (Liverpool)
Margaret Binns (Hove)
Liz Cook (Chester le Street)
Howard Cooke (South Croydon)
Moira Greenhalgh (Marlborough)
Jill Halliday (Pulham St Mary)
Grace Homes (Reading)
Ann and Tim Hudson (Chichester)
Brian Hunter (London)
Cherry Lavell (Cheltenham)
J. Naomi Linzer (Redway, CA)
Jean Macqueen (Slough)
Betty Moys (Badgers Mount)
Norma Munson (Rockford, IL)
Adrian T. Sumner (North Berwick)
Madeleine Swann (Twickenham)
Elizabeth Wallis (Kew)
Nancy Wolff (Montclair, NJ)
Diane Worden (Kalamazoo, MI)
Michael Wyatt (Surry Hills, NSW)
Pilar Wyman (Annapolis, MD)

Contributions of review extracts welcomed by the editor of this section, Christine Shuttleworth (please see inside front cover for further details). Closing dates for the next two issues 30 May and 30 November 2001.