

# 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

**Blackwell Science:** *Muscles, nerves and movement in human occupation*, by B. Tyldesley and J. I. Grieve (2002, 280 pp, £24.99). Rev. by Jo Jackson, *International Journal of Therapy and Rehabilitation*, 10(4), April 2003.

The final test for a book of this kind is whether it is easy to navigate by using the index. The index clearly directs the reader to the relevant sections and is supported by a useful glossary.

**Boydell:** *Letters and diaries of Kathleen Ferrier*, ed. Christopher Fifield (346 pp, £25/\$39.95). Rev. by Hilary Finch, *BBC Music Magazine*, January 2004.

Fifield's collection is scrupulously edited . . . there are invaluable indexes of personalia, letters, works and venues.

**Butterworth/Heinemann:** *Veterinary oncology*, by K. A. Hahn, ed. S. P. Messonier (2002, 318 pp). Rev. by Mary K. Klein, *Veterinary and Comparative Oncology*, 1(3): 168.

. . . it is often difficult to find your subject as some items such as non-osteosarcoma bone tumours in dogs might not intuitively be looked for under 'N' in this alphabetized system. The text, however, is indexed well and with little difficulty readers should be able to find the information they are looking for.

**Cambridge University Press:** *Correspondence of Charles Darwin* (vols 11, 12 and 23), ed. Frederick Burkhardt *et al.* (1038, 694 and 695 pp, £65, £60 and £65 respectively). Rev. by Jim Endersby, *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 November 2004.

The index and extensive footnotes that accompany these volumes also allow readers to learn more about all kinds of obscure aspects of Victorian natural history. By starting with the index entries for 'hothouse', I found myself immersed for days in the minutiae of how much a Victorian greenhouse cost to build, where to buy iron ventilators and similar equipment, how exotic plants had to be packed for a five-hour cart journey to prevent frost damage, and how the structure of the Bird of Paradise flower, *Strelitzia reginae*, proves it to be bird-pollinated . . .

**CIP:** *Critical survey of poetry*, ed. Philip K. Jason (2002, 8 vols, 5029 pp, \$475). Rev. by Mary Ann Carcich, *School Library Journal*, April 2003.

*Critical Survey* provides original critiques by single reviewers . . . and three indexes: geographical, categorized, subject – all useful aids to student understanding. The category index is particularly helpful: students can search by cultural identity, historical periods and literary movements, and poetic forms and themes. Poets' names and poem titles are included in the subject index.

**Faber:** *Collected poems of Ted Hughes*, ed. Paul Keegan (1333 pp, £40). Rev. by Ruth Padel, *Financial Times*, 20 December 2004.

These 1,333 pages, beautifully collated and indexed, let you track what Ted Hughes did with his gift, which blazes even from the juvenilia.

**Facet Publishing:** *Metadata applications and management*, ed. G. E. Gorman (2003, 384 pp, £60). Rev. by Olwen Terris, *Multimedia Information & Technology*, 30(1), February 2004.

Managing and imposing structure on web resources is a daunting and exacting task which is inviting worldwide professional scrutiny and financial investment; for this reviewer, a traditional back-of-the-book index serves as a quick and efficient road into the debate.

**Fourth Estate:** *How mumbo-jumbo conquered the world: a short history of modern delusions*, by Francis Wheen (338 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Philip Hensher, *The Spectator*, 31 January 2004.

Like Francis Wheen's other books, this one ends in a deliriously funny index, which is worth the cover price on its own. One entry:

Blair, Tony: claims descent from Abraham; defends secondary picketing; defends teaching of creationism; displays coat-hangers; emotional guy; explores Third Way; likes chocolate-cake recipe; sneers at market forces; takes mud-bath in Mexico; venerates Princess Diana; worships management gurus.

Or, on the other side of the political spectrum:

Thatcher, Margaret: chooses market-minded Archbishop; economic delusions; enjoys 'electric baths'; quotes St Francis; quotes St Paul; revives Victorian values; sides with good against evil; supports terrorism; thinks the unthinkable.

Best of all, and something which tells you, as they say, where Wheen is coming from, is an entry for God:

Accepted by Newton; angered by feminists and gays; appoints American coal-owners; approves of *laissez-faire* economics; arrives in America; asked by Khomeini to cut off foreigners' hands; believed to have created humans 10,000 years ago; could have made intelligent sponges; doesn't foresee Princess Diana's death; helps vacuum-cleaner saleswoman; interested in diets; offers investment advice; praised by Enron chairman; produces first self-help manual. . . .

The enchantingly funny index . . . and the book itself, make a serious point; anything worth saying should be susceptible to rational summary. Anything else is deeply suspect.

Rev. by Martin Ince, *New Scientist*, 27 March 2004.

Francis Wheen's book has the index of the year. The entry 'Blair, Tony: claims descent from Abraham, [page] 165' gives the flavour.

**Harassowitz Verlag** (Wiesbaden, Germany): *Erwin Panofsky: Korrespondenz 1937 bis 1949*, ed. Dieter Wuttke (2003, 1391 pp, €180). Rev. by Horst Bredekamp, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 14/15 February 2004.

The editor's foreword hints at the immense demands an edition of this type makes. The commentaries leave hardly a single gap, and the index of names and subjects is a work of art in itself. [*Translation by Michael Robertson, who sent this item.*]

**Haworth Information Press:** *aspects of cataloging and classification*, ed. Martin D. Joachim (2003, 604 pp). Rev. by J. H. Bowman, *Library & Information Update*, 3(3), March 2004.

Indexes to these Haworth special volumes vary considerably, but this is one of the good ones, being very full; in fact there is rather more duplication of entries than one would be entitled to expect. [*A good thing, surely?*]

**Hutchinson:** *My life*, by Bill Clinton (2004, 1024 pp, £25). Rev. by Boyd Tonkin, *Independent*, 2 July 2004.

So here's some advice for public figures who would like their books to be read on publication, rather than just toted and cited. Remember to forget a proper index. Future scholars and students will curse you, with good reason. But your central arguments will run a lower risk of being drowned out by the sound of a legion of page-riffling pundits as they look up – let us say – 'Lewinsky, Monica', and take it from there. *My Life*, by the way, contains a truly magnificent index: 38 exemplary pages, with all the major topics minutely subdivided as well.

**Iowa State Press:** *Duncan & Prasse's veterinary laboratory medicine: clinical pathology* (4th edn) (2003, 473 pp, \$49.99). Rev. by Julia E. Stickle, *Veterinary Clinical Pathology*, **32**(4), 2003.

For optimal value as a reference, an extensive index for rapid location of information is beneficial. The index of this 4th edition, expanded by more than 250%, along with the basic outline format bodes well for its future value as a quick source of information for the practicing veterinarian.

**Iowa State Press:** *Pathology of pet and aviary birds*, by R. E. Schmidt, D. R. Reavill and D. N. Phalen (2003, 234 pp, \$149.99). Rev. in *Veterinary Pathology*, **41**, 199–200, 2004.

The index is very thorough, including broader subjects such as infectious diseases as well as specific diseases and pathogens.

**Methodist Conference 2003, Conference Arrangements Committee:** *Methodism in Wales: a short history of the Wesley tradition*, ed. Lionel Madden (2003, 137 pp, £6). Rev. in *Methodist Recorder*, 29 January 2004.

... the 137-page book also has a good index ...

**Microsoft Press:** *Easy Web graphics*, by Julie Adair King (2001, 279 pp, \$19.99). Rev. by Ginny Hudak-David, *Technical Communication*, **50**(4), November 2003.

Her expertise shows in this book, with its nicely done index (including hot pink cross-references!).

**Oxford University Press:** *Aulus Gellius: an Antonine scholar and his achievements* (revised edn) (460 pp, £70). Rev. by Jane Lightfoot, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 April 2004.

There are (in response to complaints from the first reviewers) new indices [*sic*] of Greek and Latin words, and of passages cited from Gellius and other authors; and, finally, the subject index is much improved, not least because Oxford University Press have used their customary system of subheadings, thus avoiding a rebarbative list of 101 undifferentiated entries on M. Terentius Varro. [*Why does the reviewer apparently assume that OUP is alone in using subheadings?*]

**Palgrave Macmillan:** *Women writing modern fiction: a passion for ideas*, by Janice Rossen (2003, 193 pp, £45). Rev. by Hazel K. Bell, *Green Leaves* (journal of the Barbara Pym Society), September 2004.

All authors and novels cited, and concepts, are traceable through the excellent index (by Janey Fisher) ... I feel sure that Pym would have approved the book and the index.

**University of California Press:** *Becoming Marianne Moore: the early poems, 1907–1924*, ed. Robin G. Schulze (504 pp, \$50). Rev. by Fiona Green, *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 January 2004.

One of the joys of a full facsimile of *Observations* [included in this volume] is the index Moore prepared for her book. If you use it in the ordinary way to find a particular poem, you will meet some curiosities: not only such conventional reversals as 'FISH, THE', but 'COUSINS, MY APISH' and 'GARDENING, INJUDICIOUS'. This is an index of subjects as well as titles, and you can use it to navigate the poems, following up references to 'Texas' or 'toadyism'. Better still, read from top to bottom the index almost seems a poem itself, a catalogue equivalent in quirkiness and character to Moore's verse. Just as alphabetical sequence will bring about unforeseen juxtapositions – Tolstoy, torso, tortoise, trivial (of marriage or parakeets), Trollope, trousers, truths – so in Moore's verse unexpected felicities issue from the marriages between different species of language.

**Wiltshire Buildings Record:** *Wiltshire town houses 1500–1900*, by Pamela L. Slocombe (2001, 112 pp, £6). Rev. by Robert Currey and Bill Keir, *Vernacular Architecture*, **33**, 2002.

It will be of immense value, not only to those studying buildings in Wiltshire, but also to others looking for parallels for features in townhouses elsewhere. To aid such comparative work, there is an admirably thorough index which covers the whole series of Wiltshire Records publications ...

## Two cheers!

**American Society for Microbiology:** *Natural pathogens of laboratory animals: their effects on research*, by David G. Baker (2003, 397 pp, \$119.95). Rev. by C. Max Lang, *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, **224**(6), March 15, 2004.

It is adequately indexed, although the table of contents provides a more rapid guide to the contents.

**Balans** (Netherlands): *Het Drama Ahold (The Ahold drama)*, by Jeroen Smit (336 pp, €17.50). Rev. by J. van der Vaart, *NRC Handelsblad*, 27 February 2004.

De vlakke epiloog voegt niet toe. In plaats daarvan kan een zakenindex komen, onmisbaar naast de wel opgenomen index op personen. (The epilogue is shallow and does not add anything. Instead one could place a subject index, which is indispensable next to the name index which has been included.) [*Translation by Caroline Diepeveen, who submitted this item.*]

**British Library:** *Guide to libraries in key UK companies*, ed. Emma McKenzie (2003, 103 pp, £25). Rev. by Christine O'Hare, *Library & Information Update*, **3**(4), April 2004.

It is easy to find your way around this guide, which is arranged alphabetically by company name and also includes subject and company name indexes. The subject index, however, does not immediately alert the user to the most relevant sources. Would you, for example, think of looking under Chemicals and Chemical Engineering for tobacco companies?

**Fitzroy Dearborn/Taylor & Francis:** *Encyclopedia of caves and karst science*, ed. John Gunn (£95). Rev. by Douglas Palmer, *New Scientist*, 7 February 2004.

Bonuses are the enormous range of supporting materials, from colour photographs to maps and tables and a good index – the essential ingredient for negotiating this encyclopedia. At the best part of 100 pages running from A2 (a cave in Switzerland) to zygomycetes (bread moulds), plus a separate alphabetical list of entries and thematic list, no one should get lost even in the deeper sink holes and phreatic tubes of the *Encyclopedia of Caves and Karst Science*.

**McGraw-Hill Education:** *Fitzpatrick's Dermatology in general medicine*, ed. I. M. Freeberg *et al.* (2003, £370). Rev. by Neil H. Cox, *British Journal of Dermatology*, **150**, 2004.

The index is generally good but the scientific explosion does lead to some problems – there is almost a full page of index entries for interleukins but a strange absence of iontophoresis, for example.

**Marshall Cavendish:** *Reptiles and amphibians* (2002, 11 vols, 1568 pp, \$459.95). Rev. by Eva Elisabeth VonAncken, *School Library Journal*, April 2003.

While exceedingly thorough, the many indexes ('Comprehensive,' 'Behaviors,' 'Geographical Classification,' 'Biological Classification,' and others) may confuse younger students.

**Salerno Editrice:** *Ateneo I Deipnosofisti. I dotti a banchetto*, ed. L. Canfora (2001, 4 vols, cxxi + 2049 pp + Greek text in 4th vol, 773 pp). Rev. by John Wilkins, *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, **123**, 2003.

The volumes include a useful bibliography ... indexes of proper names and notable things. ... These reference tools are a most welcome update to the indexes of Kaibel and Gulick. Modern editions are used for reference (Gulick is over 60 years old [*not to be relied upon, then?*]); his indices are far from comprehensive, as – perhaps inevitably – is the general index of this edition, and the

index of authors and the bibliography are both very well done. These, together with Christian Jacob's introduction, make the work an indispensable acquisition for every library. [*But why 'indexes' twice and 'indices' once?*]

**Tempus:** *Offa's Dyke: history and guide*, by David Hill and Margaret Worthington (£12.99). Rev. by David A. Hinton, *British Archaeology*, 74, January 2004.

Technicalities are not explained when first used; for example, a marking-out bank (my hyphen) is talked about on page 54, but the reader is not told what one is until page 87. True, an excellent index has the relevant entry, but does not locate the explanation.

## Indexes censured

**Boydell Press:** *A history of Ely Cathedral*, ed. Peter Meadows and Nigel Ramsay (£29.95). Rev. by Nicholas Orme, *Church Times*, 6 February 2004.

The format is more constrained than that of some other chapters, since it does not give chapters to the monuments, estates, educational institutions, or relationships with the town. These and other matters are discussed during the course of the book, but it is not always easy to find the topics, because the index does not classify them in their own right, but lists them under a few major headings in the order in which they appear in the book. The frustration of this reviewer, trying to search for 'education' and the 'Peasants' Revolt', for example, bodes ill for those who consult the book, as opposed to just browsing through it.

**Cambridge University Press:** *The Orient on the Victorian stage*, by Edward Ziter (246 pp, £45). Rev. by Robert Irwin, *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 April 2004.

Neither Alexandria nor the Panopticon features in a rather unsatisfactory index.

**Centre for Information Studies, Charles Sturt University** (Wagga Wagga, NSW): *Organising knowledge in a global society: principles and practice in libraries and information centres*, by Ross Harvey and Philip Hider (2003, 375 pp, A\$71.50, about £29). Rev. by J. H. Bowman, *Library & Information Update*, 3(7-8), July/August 2004.

The index could be better; some cross-references should have been turned into double entries, and others are missing (e.g. from 'Metadata' to 'Dublin Core').

**Chatto and Windus:** *Just law: the changing face of justice – and why it matters to us all*, by Helena Kennedy (356 pp, £20). Rev. by Michael Beloff, *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 April 2004.

The index is capricious, even discriminatory, allowing a cross-check on Harold Wilson the Prime Minister, but not Harold Wilson the circuit judge, both of whom are mentioned in the text.

**Churchill Livingstone:** *Forfar & Arneil's textbook of pediatrics* (6th edn), ed. N. McIntosh, P. J. Helms and R. L. Smyth (2003, 1985 pp, £150). Rev. by Timothy Lachlan Chambers, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 97, February 2004.

Take, for example, single umbilical artery. A distinguished retired paediatrician telephoned me, concerned about his grandfetus [*is this a recognized medical term?*] which had been found through antenatal scanning to be one umbilical artery short. I scrutinized the index of the new *Forfar & Arneil (F&A)*: try single – no; try artery – no. Try the index of the current *Nelson Textbook* (same publishing stable, cheaper, American) – yes, on page 528, a concise informative paragraph. Try Google – nearly 1300 citations, reproducible instantly on my printer and no heavy book to balance on the knees. The moral? The talents of editors and contributors might be put to better use in more contemporary information transfer.

**Continuum:** *Edward Schillebeeckx: a theologian in his history*, by Erik Borgman (£30). Rev. by Peter Phillips, *The Tablet*, 21 February 2004.

The index is inadequate: a brief, sometimes incomplete, index of personal names is just not sufficient. Though the notes are good, a

detailed subject index and bibliography of Schillebeeckx' work from this period is an essential tool for a volume like this. This is something that might be corrected in the second volume to which I look forward.

**Fayard** (Paris): *La cinéphilie: invention d'un regard, histoire d'une culture, 1944–1968*, by Antoine de Bacque (405 pp, €22). Rev. by Robin Buss, *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 January 2004.

... the index to Antoine de Bacque's study of French cinephilia has a mere two references to Malle (compared with fifty-eight to Godard, some of them several pages long); and the object of one of those two references turns out to be not the film director [Louis Malle] but an old trunk ('une vieille malle'), lazy computer indexing compounding the insult of neglect.

**Fourth Estate:** *Ring road*, by Ian Sansom (388 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Francis King, *The Spectator*, 10 April 2004.

A preliminary riffle through the novel is not all that encouraging. Three pages of spoof Acknowledgments ('some of them are dead; most of them are strangers; the famous are not friends') range from Graham Swift to Jonathan Swift and from Stevie Wonder to Ralph Vaughan Williams. There is a spoof Preface and a spoof 19-page index of 'Key Words, Phrases and Concepts' of absolutely no use even to a reviewer in a hurry. ... Facetiousness is fine at a dinner party, in a pub or in *Private Eye*. But on this scale in a novel it not only ceases to amuse but becomes exasperating.

[*See another view of this novel-with-an-index under 'Obiter dicta'.*]

**HarperCollins:** *The earth: an intimate history*, by Richard Fortey (2004, 477 pp, £25). Rev. by Robert Hanks, *Daily Telegraph*, 6 March 2004.

I found myself longing for a glossary of geological terms and a few more maps (at the very least, a more thorough index would have allowed me to retrace my steps more easily).

**Haworth Information Press:** *reference services: issues and trends*, ed. Stacey Kimmel and Jennifer Heise (2003, 194 pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Amanda Duffy, *Library & Information Update*, 3(3), March 2004.

Reading this book will save you time if you are thinking about how to set up a virtual reference service, and also make you consider other aspects of your reference and information service along the way. The index, however, is hard work. [*In what way?*]

**Hodder & Stoughton:** *The River Cottage meat book*, by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall (544 pp, £25). Rev. by Felicity Lawrence, *Guardian*, 19 June 2004.

Favourites are also revisited – you'll find an excellent bolognese (despite the index's best efforts to hide it) ...

**Iowa State Press:** *External fixation in small animal practice*, by K. H. Kraus and J. P. Toombs (2003, 233 pp, \$127.99). Rev. by Greg Harasen, *Canadian Veterinary Journal*, 45, February 2004.

In addition, the index is inadequate consisting of barely 2/3 of a page.

**Macmillan:** *Inside Hitler's bunker*, by Joachim Fest (190 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Noble Frankland, *The Spectator*, 24 April 2004.

... unfortunately, the index is far from adequate.

**Manchester University Press:** *Leos Carax*, by Fergus Daly and Garin Dowd (188 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Robin Buss, *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 February 2004.

If there is a director with whom Carax is to be compared, it is ... the exiled Chilean baroque master Raoul Ruiz. The name of Ruiz occurs in page after page – far more often than the dozen references in the index, which must have been compiled by a very lazy computer.

**Mason Crest:** *Childcare worker* and *Special education teacher*, by Elyn Sanna (2003, 90p each). Rev. by Beth Jones, *School Library Journal*, February 2003.

The glossaries and indexes are somewhat minimal.

**Oxford University Press:** *The collected letters of A. W. N. Pugin, Vol 2, 1843–1845*, ed. Margaret Belcher (515 pp, £80). Rev. by Robert Hewison, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 October 2004.

It is to be hoped that the final volume will have a more detailed index . . .

**Parthenon:** *An atlas of diseases of the nail*, by P. Rich and R. Scher (104 pp, £59.99). Rev. by Celia Moss, *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, vol. 97, April 2004.

Those keen to differentiate onychorrhexis, onychia and onychocryptosis (caused by 'faulty biomechanics in the elderly') would want more facts. It is impossible to look them up because the index, at least in my copy, stops abruptly and mysteriously at N (for nail).

**Pimlico:** *George Crabbe: an English life 1754–1832*, by Neil Powell (372 pp, £12.50). Rev. by Alan Hollingshurst, *Guardian*, 24 April 2004.

His biography has no illustrations, no maps, and one of those unbearable indexes which says, for instance, 'Burke, Edmund' followed by a list of 32 page numbers.

**Profile:** *Heloise and Abelard: a twelfth-century love story*, by James Burge (301 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Gillian Tindall, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 January 2004.

Also, this nicely produced book (proper bibliography, the right maps and pictures) has an oddly feeble index.

**Psychology Press:** *Statistics for the behavioural sciences: an introduction*, by R. Russo (2003, 242 pp, £9.95). Rev. by Michael F. W. Festing, *Animal Welfare*, 2004, 13: 251–259.

Chapter 4 deals largely with the binomial distribution, starting with examples of coin tossing and the rolling of dice. Interestingly, the null hypothesis is introduced here on p. 71 although in the index the first mention of it is on p. 88.

**W B Saunders:** *Zoo and wild animal medicine* (5th edn), by Murray E. Fowler and Eric Miller (2003, 992 pp, \$129). Rev. by Jennifer N. Langan, *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association*, 224(6), March 15, 2004.

The book is organised extremely well, but the index could have been expanded. In some cases, important information, such as ivermectin toxicosis in chelonians, may be difficult to find.

**Scarecrow:** *Victorian horizons: the reception of the picture books of Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott and Kate Greenaway*, by Anne Lundin (2001, 296 pp, £57). Rev. by Diana Dixon, *Library & Information Update*, 3(1), January 2004.

Scholars will be disappointed by the limitations of its index.

**Weidenfeld & Nicolson:** *Hitler's Mediterranean gamble*, by Douglas Porch (£25, 794 pp). Rev. by Noble Frankland, *The Spectator*, 17 July 2004.

In a book of 683 pages with another 111 devoted to source references and index, it would be surprising if no defects were noticeable. In this case there are a few. The index is inadequate. The maps are miserable . . .

## Indexes omitted

**Ashgate:** *The bibliography of regional fiction in Britain and Ireland 1800 to 2000*, by Keith D. M. Snell (2002, 335 pp, £45). Rev. by Diana Dixon, *Library & Information Update*, 3(2), February 2004.

The arrangement of the book is by historical counties. . . . There seems to be some inconsistencies – in that Edinburgh and Glasgow merit separate entries but not Liverpool or Manchester. For this reason an author index would have been a great help in locating material.

**British Library:** *Stephenson Blake: the last of the old English type-founders*, by Roy Millington (247 pp, £35). Rev. by Sebastian Carter, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 October 2003.

A firmer editorial hand . . . would have reduced repetition, improved the punctuation throughout, and insisted on a proper index.

**Cape:** *The A–Z guide to modern British history*, by Mark Garnett and Richard Weight (518 pp, £20). Rev. by Peter Mandler, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 January 2004.

Alphabetical order: Not perhaps the best way to organize entries in a guide to modern British history, especially one which claims to present a 'consistent' as well as a 'controversial' interpretation across hundreds of varied entries. Thematic organization – politics, popular culture, social trends, 'celebrities', etc – might have conveyed the central messages better, with a comprehensive index providing access to specific topics. [*This is the first paragraph of an ingenious review whose paragraphs begin with successive letters of the alphabet.*]

**Darton, Longman and Todd:** *A new map of the world*, by Ian Linden (164 pp, £10.95). Rev. by John Kennedy, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 February 2004.

This book sparkles with ideas and lightly worn experience. But there should be a corner of Hell for publishers who produce a book as good as this with no index.

**Earthscan Publications and Royal Institute of International Affairs:** *Policing international trade in endangered species: the CITES treaty and compliance*, by R. Reeve (2002, 367 pp, £45). Rev. by Margaret C. Cooper, *Animal Welfare*, 2004, 13: 99–104.

Any complaints? One result of this being a good read for those interested in CITES is that the reviewer found the pages falling out much too soon. . . . Also – a big one, this – where is the index? This publication appeared in its original form at the Nairobi CITES Conference in 2000. Surely there was time to compile an index for the 2002 version?

**English Heritage and University of Reading:** *Smoke blackened thatch: a unique source of late medieval plant remains from southern England*, by John B. Letts (2000, 62 pp, £15).

**English Heritage Research Transactions:** *Thatch: thatching in England 1790–1940*, by James Moir and John Letts (1999, 218 pp, £30), and *Thatch: thatching in England 1940–1994*, by Jo Cox and John Letts (2000, 101 pp, £30). Rev. by Peter Child, *Vernacular Architecture*, 33 (2002).

Glossaries and bibliographies are excellent in all three, but annoyingly there are no indexes.

**Michael Joseph:** *A royal duty*, by Paul Burrell (2003, 416 pp, £17.99). Rev. by Robert McCrum, *Observer*, 2 November 2003.

Not every writer works best to a deadline, or with the best results. Not every book is best served by high-speed publication. There is a case for writing slowly, with forethought. The risk of playing in the premier league is the familiar one of burn-out; poor editing, over-hasty composition, the elimination of important literary apparatus. *A Royal Duty*, for example, has no index.

For the likes of Paul Burrell, such concerns are probably irrelevant . . .

**Kegan Paul:** *The kraken and the colossal octopus*, by Bernard Heuvelmans (2003, 330 pp, £85). Rev. by Bob Rickard, *Fortean Times*, FT175, October 2003.

Given the importance and monster-sized price of this volume, it is all the more regrettable that it lacks an introduction and a preface (noting the difference between this and earlier versions); nor do the impressive 49-page bibliography and footnotes make up for the lack of an index, essential to a work of this calibre.

**John Murray:** *Love, sex and tragedy*, by Simon Goldhill (368 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Lizzie Speller, *Observer*, 16 May 2004.

Goldhill opts for brief endnotes, and his further reading list is excellent. But either he or his publishers have decided to do away with an index. There is no returning to check facts or look up a reference. In an important book with such a breadth of material, this is an incomprehensible omission.

**New York Review of Books:** *The reckless mind: intellectuals in politics*, by Mark Lilla (£8.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 6 March 2004.

There is no index. Even a bad one would have been preferable. [*Discuss.*]

**Picador:** *Tales from the torrid zone: travels in the tropics*, by Alexander Frater (2004, 400 pp, £17.990). Rev. by George Rosie, *Sunday Herald*, 23 May 2004.

The publishers – Picador – could have done us all a service by showing us where Vanuatu is in relation to its biggest neighbour (Australia) and how this fascinating little state is made up. And I think there is enough hard information between the covers to warrant an index.

**Regan Books:** *Nemesis*, by Peter Evans (336 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Selina Hastings, *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 July 2004.

Apart from the lack of an index (a curious piece of authorial bad manners), his book can be highly recommended . . .

**Short Books:** *Cooking for kings: the life of Antonin Carême, the first celebrity chef*, by Ian Kelly (287 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Paul Levy, *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 November 2003.

There are no sources for the many assertions, quotations, facts and speculations; indeed, there is no way for the reader to distinguish between fact and speculation, and there is no index.

**Simon & Schuster:** *The point of departure*, by Robin Cook (368 pp, £20). Rev. by Paul Routledge, *The Spectator*, 25 October 2003.

What a pity that his publisher was too lazy, or in too much of a hurry, to furnish an index. [See also the final item under 'Obiter dicta'.]

## Obiter dicta

**Chandos Publishing:** *A librarian's guide to the internet*, by Jeanne Froidevaux Müller (2003, 188 pp, £39). Rev. by Duncan Chappell, *Library & Information Update*, 3(4), April 2004.

Claims that commercial search engines are always more dependable or that human indexing is automatically less accurate are simplistic.

**CILIP Information Services Group:** *Evaluating electronic resources: a guide*, ed. Diana Dixon, Chris Martindale and Valerie J. Nurcombe (2002, 41 pp, £12). Rev. by Elizabeth Anne Melrose, *Library & Information Update*, 3(2), February 2004.

The information sources that are considered encompass e-journals and e-books, electronic databases, e-libraries, web resources, online and CD-Rom lists and directories and, lastly, datasets. There is a short introduction to each chapter and then the relevant criteria are examined; objectivity, accuracy, authority and indexing are considered germane to all. For each source, questions are posed under each heading to trigger the critical faculties of the information professional – on e-books, for example, 'Are there indexes or is specific searching achieved through a search engine? Can the book be downloaded?'

**Continuum:** *The Continuum political encyclopedia of the Middle East* (2002, 944 pp, \$175). Rev. by Alicia Eames, *School Library Journal*, April 2003.

Cross-references, a few black-and-white maps, and an 'index' with no page numbers are also provided. [About as much use as a chocolate teapot, surely?]

**Fourth Estate:** *Ring road*, by Ian Sansom, 388 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Sam Thompson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 April 2004.

*Ring Road* [a novel] has an enjoyable sense of itself as an artefact. It is generous with textual apparatus, insisting that this is not a gimmick but a courtesy: there are summary epigraphs to each chapter, an index 'intended for the curious, the wary and the professionally lazy', plentiful footnotes (referring to strands of story elsewhere, or unfolding new ones in miniature), and a preface . . .

**MIT Press:** *The new media reader*, ed. Noah Waldrip-Fruin and Nick Montfort, designed by Michale Crumpton (2003, 821 pp, £29.95). Rev. by Jeremy Husinger, *Managing Information*, March 2004, 11(2).

The authors have worked with an information designer to construct several alternative ways of reading this book. By reading across the top and outside of the page, you can read the book entirely in a temporal context. More interesting than the temporal ordering is the intertextuality constructed into the text. The authors have used the side of the page as an intertextual index for related ideas and thoughts. These are centered in the introduction to each piece.

**Sun Technical Publications:** *Read me first! A style guide for the computer industry* (2nd edn, 2003, 356 pp, \$34.99). Rev. by Todd Hawley, *Technical Communication*, 51(1), February 2004.

Indexing has its own chapter, relatively unchanged from the first edition. I agree that the topic deserves this special attention. Indexing is an important part of what many writers do while creating manuals, even if some of us secretly cringe at the thought of doing indexes and see them as an afterthought, and writing classes usually don't cover the topic at all.

## If you can't beat them . . .

An administration official said Bush aides had learned from their failure to squelch critical books by ignoring or attacking them. So, the aides decided that not only would they not attack [Bob] Woodward's book [*Plan of Attack*, which is not entirely uncritical of the president], they would promote it. They concluded that the book – with index entries that included 'Bush, George W.: absence of doubt in . . . optimism of . . . patience of . . . reluctance to go to war of . . . as strong leader' – largely portrayed him the way they liked to portray him.

'White House chose to promote new book', by Mike Allen, *Washington Post*, 27 April 2004

## Doing the donkey work

And then there was the index. Joyce and Reggie had never made an index in their lives. But they insisted on doing all the donkey-work. On my next visit it was all written out in Reggie's efficient angular writing. I had only to add a dash of expertise in sorting out a few tangles to be hailed as a genius and given all the credit – just the reverse of what usually happens.

Richard Garnett in *Joyce: by herself and her friends*, ed Reggie Grenfell and Richard Garnett (Futura/Macdonald, 1980)

## On second thoughts . . .

Robin Cook [is] now working on a new chapter [of his book *The Point of Departure*], and Simon & Schuster will publish the second edition in August – with an index this time, which he's pleased about. His wife, Gaynor, wasn't so sure. An index will promptly lose him an entire constituency of politicians who only want to know if they're in it, and currently have actually to read the book to find out.

AE, 'Hay diary', *Guardian*, 5 June 2004.

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