

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 readers 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

Allen Lane: *The command of the ocean*, by N. A. M. Rodger (2004, 704 pp, £30). Rev. by Paul Kennedy, *Sunday Times*, 19 September 2004.

Credit must also go to the publisher who, very wisely, has not stinted in providing excellent additional features – lavish illustrations, maps, important appendices, a stunning index and, my favourite, an annotated bibliography full of insightful but often dryly wicked remarks . . . This is, surely, an award-winning work, and one that not just professional naval historians will want to possess. [Index by SI member John Noble.]

Ashgate: *Thomas Hardy's 'Facts' notebook*, ed. by William Greenslade (2004, 365 pp, £49.50). Rev. by David Edelsten, 20 November 2004.

This book will be indispensable to Hardy scholars; the editor has done an excellent job, the notes are helpful and exhaustive. But I don't believe you need to be a Hardy buff to value it. Well-indexed, it is a ragbag which many interested in that period and in the West of England will enjoy rummaging through.

Atlantic Books: *Samuel Johnson's Dictionary*, ed. by Jack Lynch (2004, 646 pp, £19.99). Rev. by Christopher Howse, *The Spectator*, 20 November 2004.

There is added an interesting index of the sources for the quotations, author by author.

BDJ Books: *A clinical guide to general medicine and surgery for dental practitioners*, by M. Greenwood and J. G. Meechan (64 pp, £24.95). Rev. by St John Crean, *Dental Update*, November 2004.

A good index completes the book.

Bloodaxe Books: *Being alive*, by Neil Astley (2004, 464 pp, £10.95). Rev. by Andrew Motion, *The Times*, 30 October 2004.

The best thing we can say about the index to a poetry anthology is that it's reliable. But the index to *Being Alive* does more than that: it quietly advertises one of the mysteries of late 20th-century poetry – by putting, after the name of the contributor Rosemary Tonks, 'b. London, 1932: disappeared 1970s'.

British Library: *British book publishing as a business since the*

1960s: selected essays, by Eric de Bellaigue (2004, x + 238 pp, £17.99). Rev. by Iain Stevenson, *LOGOS*, 15(2), 2004.

It is always instructive when getting the measure of a new book to inspect the index first. This is both to get a sense of the author's emphases and interests and because a careful and well made index betokens thoroughness, clarity and originality. One would expect the latter qualities from Eric de Bellaigue, an elegant, incisive and often heterodox chronicler of the massive changes that have overtaken the British publishing business in the last forty years. And characteristically his index throws up some surprises: that Stephen King receives more entries than Peter Mayer is intriguing, and it suggests a pleasing sense of historical perspective to discover the Bodley Head has as many entries as Bloomsbury Publishing. It is somehow satisfying to see that Salman Rushdie has more entries than Robert Maxwell, while the two most-cited individual publishers are Michael Joseph and Richard Charkin, prompting thoughts of a most interesting partnership. The index is indeed well-constructed and thorough and in its dry, spare style conveys exactly the essence and the outlook of this most welcome book. [Index by the author.]

Chandos Publishing: *Finding legal information: a guide to print and electronic sources*, by David Pester (2003, 283 pp, £55 hbk, £39 pbk). Rev. by Mandy Webster, *Library & Information Update*, 3(6), June 2004.

The abbreviations list is thorough and the index of websites excellent, giving page references and URLs for quick location. Essential for a source citing websites, practical tips are included, such as using site maps and search facilities on each website if a particular page cannot be found.

Droste: *Beschlüsse des Rates der Stadt Köln 1320–1550* (vol. 6), ed. by Manfred Groten and Manfred Huiskes (2003, 424 pp, €50.60). Rev. by Robert Jütte, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 35 (2004).

Minutes of town council sessions are a rich source for almost every aspect of government and daily life in the sixteenth century. Although these records have survived for many German cities from the late medieval period onwards, there is hardly a printed index to this important source of information. The Municipal Archives in Cologne deserve praise for a six-volume edition of abstracts from the minutes of proceedings and decisions taken by the aldermen in one of Germany's largest and most important imperial cities. The first volume in this series appeared in 1989 – see *SCJ* 20 (1989): 360–61. It took more than fourteen years before the final volume (including indexes) of this invaluable series of town records could appear. Both editors are to be thanked not only for their painstaking work, but also for their perseverance. It would have been difficult to use the five volumes without such an index. Now we finally have what the community of early modern scholars have been waiting for, namely a reliable index to persons, places, and subjects. Thus it is easy, for example, to trace the careers of town council members and local officials. The subject index proves that not only highly important political and judicial matters were discussed in the sessions of the town council, but also poultry, head money, the diet of prisoners, and other more trivial issues were also

a matter of concern to the magistrates. The subject index is a real bonanza for those who look for references that are hard to find in other records. Moreover, medical historians too will find access to documents relating not only to disease management in times of plague but also to pertinent issues, such as stench in the streets, cripples, corpses, and so forth. [*Oh, good.*]

Granta Books: *Lost worlds: what have we lost, and where did it go?* by Michael Bywater (2004, 296 pp, £12.99). Rev. by David Flusfeder, *Daily Telegraph*, 20 November 2004.

One of the most entertaining parts of this always entertaining book is its index: 'Facial hair, the musical influence of' is sandwiched between 'Face, vibrating' and 'Faith, the mystery of, obliterated'. But, as befits a traditionalist, even one as angry and eccentric as Bywater, 'God' has the highest number of entries, followed by 'Men', 'Man', 'Women', 'Love'. Then come 'American' and 'Dogs', which last category includes such entries as 'enforcing democracy', 'pink fluffy, urgent need for', and 'vomit, role in men's clothing'. The index will show you Bywater's enormous range of interests, humour, and opinions; it doesn't quite reveal his style, which can deal, straight-faced and scholarly, with the character of Noddy just as it can with the loss of God.

Haworth Press: *Internet and personal computing fads*, by Mary Ann Bell, Mary Ann Berry and James L. Van Roekel (2004, 210 pp, \$39.95). Rev. by Peter Chapman, *Library & Information Update*, 3(12), December 2004.

More than 100 terms are arranged alphabetically, supported by an index which picks out key references and alternative ways of referring to the same or similar concepts.

Hordern House Rare Books: *The encyclopedia of exploration, Vol. I: To 1800; Vol II: 1800–1850*, by Raymond John Howgego (2002 and 2004, 1184 and 704 pp, £120 and £100). Rev. by Alberto Manguel, *The Spectator*, 15 January 2005.

Howgego has obviously been at work for many years on this project with its useful and many cross-references, its bibliography for every article, its indexes of persons and (a poetical work in its own right) of ships. The result is a marvellously rich, punctiliously researched, ambitiously wide-reaching reference work, unrivalled in accuracy and scope.

Houghton Mifflin: *The Gourmet cookbook*, ed. by Ruth Reichl (2004, 1040 pp, \$40). Rev. by Julie Powell, *New York Times*, 29 September 2004.

For starters, even though it is bulky, this book is in many ways very cook-friendly. A glossary includes many recently discovered ingredients, and the index is extensive and arranged sensibly. If I should happen to find that I have, say, some leftover leeks, I can easily find a nice handful of recipes, from the simple to the complex, to fit the bill. [*But see a different view of the index under 'Indexes censured'.*]

In Pinn Publishing: *When the Alps cast their spell*, by Trevor Braham (2004, 314 pp, £20). Rev. by Eric Major, Chairman of the Judges, at the Alpine Club prize-giving ceremony, London, 8 October 2004.

Nicely produced and a first-rate index, which a book of this nature demands. [*The book won the Boardman Tasker Award for Mountaineering Literature.*]

Liffey Press: *For the kids: a family-friendly guide to outings and*

activities for children in Ireland (2004, 224 pp, £15). Rev. by Teresa Doran, *Books Ireland*, Summer 2004.

The final pages feature an invaluable index, cross-referenced firstly by activity and secondly by organisation.

Oxford University Press: *Handbook of post-operative complications*, by D. J. Leaper and A. L. G. Peel (£22.50), Rev. by P. K. Datta, *The Surgeon*, 2, 2004.

It is extensively indexed, a help to the trainee on any surgical ward round to refer to the book, as and when necessary.

Prentice Hall PTR: *Web search garage*, by Tara Calishain (2004, 304 pp, £15). Rev. by Caryn Wesner-Early, <http://freepint.com/bookshelf>, accessed 11 November 2004.

The index is very good, and makes an already useful book even more so (especially as the chapter titles aren't always helpful).

Profile: *The cardinal's hat: money, ambition and housekeeping in a Renaissance court*, by Mary Hollingsworth (308 pp, £18.99). Rev. by D. S. Chambers, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 August 2004.

Finally, and to please all readers, there are plentiful and legible on-page illustrations, including various maps and facsimile reproductions of documents, and a useful index.

SPCK: *Discovering John*, by Ruth Edwards (£14.99). Rev. by Robert Morgan, *The Reader*, 101(3), Autumn 2004.

The endnotes, bibliography and indices [*sic*] are compact and helpful.

Thorsons (in association with NCT): *Baby calming: simple solutions for a happy baby*, by Caroline Deacon (2004, £8.99). Rev. by Amanda Wildbore, *Community Practitioner*, 77(12), December 2004.

The index is comprehensive and very useful, as is the excellent list of organisations to help parents, which includes phone numbers and websites.

Truman State University Press: *Commentary on the Lamentations of the Prophet Jeremiah*, by Peter Martyr Vermigli, tr. by Daniel Shute (2002, lxx + 224 pp, \$45). Rev. by Peter Newman Brooks, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 55(2), 2003.

... the text, notes, and indices [*sic*] of *In Lamentationes Sanctissimi Ieremiae Prophetiae* are superbly set out to provide another fine volume in this important series [Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies]. [*Indexing and 'setting out' by ASI member Paula Presley.*]

University of California Press: *Three Mile Island: a nuclear crisis in historical perspective*, by Samuel Walker (2004, 315 pp, \$24.95). Rev. by Jack Harris, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 13 August 2004.

If a book has an index, I turn to it straight away to find topics of interest and then read the relevant pages. After this, I peruse all the pages from 'A' to 'Z' as this reveals the author's prejudices, priorities and competence. A good index is a fast track to the heart of a book and that of its author. Samuel Walker's *Three Mile Island* has an excellent index.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson: *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters*

1907–1964, ed. by Nigel Nicolson (2003, 496 pp, 2004). Rev. in *The Spectator*, 11 September 2004.

As editor, Nigel Nicolson could not have served his father better. There's a full and helpful index. Footnotes appear, where needed, on the same page as the text.

Weidenfeld & Nicolson: *Rivers of gold: the rise of the Spanish Empire*, by Hugh Thomas (2003, 544 pp, £25). Rev. by Paul Kennedy, *New York Times*, 25 July 2004.

Thomas has researched in all the available Spanish and Latin American archives. He seems to have read all the sources. The index is a masterpiece. [Index by SI member Douglas Matthews.]

Two cheers!

Peter Lang: *The library and reading of Jonathan Swift: a bibliographical handbook. Part One: Swift's library in four volumes*, by Dirk F. Passmann and Heinz J. Vienken (2004, 2,416 pp, £167).

The correspondence of Jonathan Swift, Volume Three: 1726–1734, ed. by David Woolley (2004, 760 pp, £50). Rev. by Claude Rawson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 September 2004.

This major work of reference [*The library...*] lacks a good general index. There is a valuable index of references to Swift's writings and correspondence, and an index of printers perversely arranged by town of publication rather than by name. Both supply page-references. On the other hand, the indexes of authors and subjects give no page-references and function merely as inert lists, of interest, but of limited use. The authors are given by nationality, rather than in a single inclusive index, an impediment to efficient searching. It is difficult to see why printers of volumes Swift owned should be better indexed than the authors he read. Nevertheless, these volumes are an indispensable contribution.

It would appear that indexing, and user-friendly formatting of reference material, are not the strong suit of the publisher. The first three volumes of *The Correspondence* [. . .] are unindexed, though a cumulative index will presumably appear in the fourth volume.

Mayo County Library: *The story of Mayo*, by Rosa Meehan (394 pp, £30). Rev. by Hugh Oram, *Books Ireland*, October 2004.

. . . overall production qualities are excellent, including a substantial and well organised index. A separate illustrations index could have been useful.

Stanford University Press: *Knowledge and money: research universities and the paradox of the marketplace*, by Roger L. Geiger (2004, 321 pp, \$70 (hbk), \$27.95 (pbk)). Rev. by Allen B. Veener, *College & Research Libraries*, January 2005.

Succinct and compact, the index to Geiger's work (comprising four full pages) lacks headings for a number of concepts given considerable attention throughout the work itself: *brand name*, *elitism*, *genomics*, *inflation*, *interdisciplinary studies*, *jackpot patenting*, *political correctness*, *'sticker price'*, *student loan culture*, *testing industry*. These are topics the serious reader may wish to return to but the index makes that nearly impossible. Index entries for several important subjects, e.g., *privatization* and *entrepreneurship*, are very sparse although the book is filled with discussions of these topics. A valuable figure referenced numerous times, 'Feedback Loop for Qualitative Competition among Selective Institutions' [page 82], is

not indexed, though it can be easily located from the table of contents. Geiger's main index entries have only a few subheadings that seem to be arranged in no particular order. However, because of their very small number, it is not troublesome to scan them quickly for an item of interest. On the plus side, some endnotes are indexed by both author and subject.

Indexes censured

Allen Lane: *The secret power of beauty: why happiness is in the eye of the beholder*, by John Armstrong (2004, 192 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Henry Hardy, *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 22 October 2004.

The index is a bad joke (try looking up 'happiness' or 'Gainsborough'). Is it meant to be a parody?

Birlinn: *The oilmen: the North sea tigers*, by Bill Mackie (2004, £14.99). Rev. by George Rosie, *The Sunday Herald*, 28 November 2004.

I enjoyed Mackie's account of the North Sea oil industry. But I would have enjoyed it a lot more if it had included a decent index (something that publishers seem increasingly reluctant to include). The book would also have benefited from a glossary of technical terms and maybe a map or two. They would have added hugely to the usefulness of what is a loosely written but very readable history [of the industry] that saved Britain's (and certainly Thatcher's) bacon in the storm-tossed 1980s.

Brill: *Nicholas of Cusa and his age: intellect and spirituality*, ed. by Thomas M. Izbicki and Christopher M. Bellitto (2002, 282 pp, \$85). Rev. by Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 34 (2004).

Despite a very useful bibliography (and an almost useless index) at the end, the work of two editors might have been more justified had a little more effort been expended to smooth out the wrinkles presented by multiple citations and redundancies.

While, with a solid introduction, a full index, and attention to the flow of the essays to justify the book form, this volume might and should have been very interesting to scholars in general, as it stands, it will probably be of more limited use – as a collection of papers for specialists already in the know.

Cambridge University Press: *The reading nation in the Romantic period*, by William St Clair (765 pp, £90). Rev. by H. J. Jackson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 July 2004.

Dense with information as the appendices are, it would not be easy to use [this book] as a reference book. The index is short and quirky. (Who is going to look for the brief copyright window under 'B'?)

Citadel Press: *Turning points in rock and roll*, by Hank Bordowitz (2004, 320 pp, £11.99). Rev. by William Keogan, 21 September 2004, www.celebritycafe.com

One small problem – the book's index leaves much to be desired. Before I started reading, I checked the index for some favourite groups such as the Mamas and the Papas and the Byrds, but neither was listed. While going through the book, however, I saw references to both groups. Some further spot checking also indicated that certain mentions in the text of the Beach Boys and the Who were not noted in the index. I have a strong suspicion that this is also true for other performers. But this is a quibble. In sum, this book is an informative stroll down the road of Rock history that fans will find entertaining.

Continuum: *Hope the archbishop*, by Rob Marshall (£16.99). Rev. by Michael Brown, *Church of England Newspaper*, 12 November 2004.

There are other eyebrow-raisers here, too. At least twice, there's the gaffe of the Church of England having an Archbishop's Council when, as everyone in the land knows, it's an Archbishops' Council (the apostrophe after the s). Then, in the index, the Queen is said to be HRH. Oh dear.

Countryman Press: *The essential Eating Well cookbook*, ed. by Patsy Jamieson (2004, 400 pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Kim Davaz, *The Register-Guard*, 27 October 2004.

(I have a quibble with the index of this book. Quick Cassoulet isn't listed under 'Cassoulet,' but you can find it as 'Quick Cassoulet' and under 'Beans,' 'Chicken' and 'Turkey.')

Fitzroy Dearborn: *Encyclopedia of the Romantic era, 1760–1850*, ed. by Christopher John Murray (2004, 2 vols, 1,277 pp, £225). Rev. by Nora Crook, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 September 2004.

... this ambitious work would have benefited from a firmer hand ... cross-referencing is patchy and the index inadequate.

Harvard University Press: *Shakespeare, Einstein and the bottom line: the marketing of higher education*, by David L. Kirp (2003, 328pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Allen B. Veaner, *College & Research Libraries*, January 2005.

On the minus side, Kirp provides no consolidated bibliography or list of references – a considerable disservice to researchers. The endnote apparatus is frustrating, with numerous instances of incomplete citations. What is one to make of endnote 38 to chapter 10, with its maddeningly uninformative reference 'Marginson, "Going Global"', especially if the reader has not been consulting all the endnotes? A backward search through the earlier endnotes to chapter 10 does not immediately produce the Marginson citation even though it is actually quite nearby. Why? Because the full citation is buried within a long comment in endnote 36. The index, rich in personal names, is of no help: it does not list Marginson ...

The index, eleven pages in length, more generous than in many other academic works, suffers from very serious deficiencies that mark the work of an amateur indexer. Several major topics, e.g., *economic issues*, *higher education*, *marketplace*, are overbroad, duplicate the book's main topics, and carry far too many locators that should have been properly subdivided. *Marketplace* comprises but a single, unsubdivided entry running to three-quarters of a column. *Economic issues*, about two-thirds of a column, is similarly arranged. Both entries are cumbersome and time-consuming to use: their subentries are merely entered according to their page number sequences, and thus are next to useless. These arrangements defy the most elementary principle of arranging large numbers of subentries: to be serviceable, they must be alphabetized by subtopic, not sequenced by page number. In one instance, a locator purports to point to a page referring to the magazine *U.S. News and World Report*, but the magazine actually discussed on that page is *Time*. Yet *Time* magazine itself has no index entry. Although the index contains a great many personal names, there is no entry for Rupert Murdoch, the well-known publishing magnate, and none for James Neal, Columbia's University Librarian and Vice President for Information Services. Neal's highly cogent comment on Columbia's failed Fathom project is buried in an endnote on page 295, accessible only under *Fathom*, not under Neal. Several personal name entries lack their full complement of locators.

Houghton Mifflin: *The Gourmet cookbook*, ed. by Ruth Reichl (2004, 1040 pp, \$40). Rev. by Jane Dornbusch, *Boston Herald*, 22 September 2004.

Reichl's faith in this book is evident in some of the hyperbole around the recipes. You'll find 'the world's best sticky bun recipe,' 'the best mac and cheese on the planet' and the 'ultimate chocolate birthday cake' among the dishes here. (But you might have to search harder than you'd like; the index has some odd quirks. You won't, for instance, find that sticky bun recipe under 'sticky,' 'bun,' or 'pecan,' but rather at 'breads – buns, pecan currant sticky.')

Frances Lincoln: *Dangerous garden*, by David Stuart (2004, 208 pp, £25). Rev. by Deni Bown, *The Garden*, September 2004.

Another gripe is that the index is patchy and – surprisingly for a book that draws some controversial conclusions – there are no footnotes.

Oxford University Press: *The Oxford dictionary of proverbs*, ed. by Jennifer Speake (2002, xiii+ 375 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Laura Hicks, *Editing Matters*, September/October 2004.

The citations giving the origin and development of many proverbs are excellent and very useful. I was less convinced by the Thematic Index at the back of the book, as I could not imagine an occasion where I would want to trace a quotation in this way, and the headings seemed rather strange, as if someone had had the idea that such an index would be useful and then had to strain to find appropriate entries.

Wright Elsevier: *Periodontics* (5th edn), by B. M. Eley and J. D. Manson (396 pp, £44.99). Rev. by Roger Mosedale, *Dental Update*, November 2004.

I and several colleagues felt the index would be difficult to use by undergraduates or other users who have not yet acquired a reasonable knowledge of periodontal terminology. There is, for instance, no direct lead to 'Risk Factors', although all are well described and discussed under various headings.

Indexes omitted

American Library Association: *Straight from the stacks: a firsthand guide to careers and information science*, by Laura Townsend Kane (2003, 156 pp, \$34). Rev. by Richard Turner, *New Library World*, 105(1202/1203), 2004.

Although there is no index or appendices, the clear structure of the book means that this is not a big problem. [*Be that as it may, these are strange omissions for a book published by the American Library Association and aimed at would-be information professionals.*]

Birlinn: *Isles of the North*, by Ian Mitchell (2004, £9.99). Rev. by Harry Reid, *The Herald* (Glasgow), 11 September 2004.

An index is badly needed.

Bloomsbury: *The devil kissed her: the story of Mary Lamb*, by Kathy Watson (245 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Virginia Rounding, *Sunday Times*, 15 August 2004.

Kathy Watson has achieved the rare combination of sensitive, meticulous research with readability. The only omissions are a bibliography and index.

Bloomsbury: *Extreme measures: the dark visions and bright ideas of Francis Galton*, by Martin Brookes (2004, 298 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Marek Kohn, *The Independent*, 20 August 2004.

Brookes's citations raise a sore point. This book has no references, bibliography or index to support its lively narrative: Bloomsbury should be ashamed.

Rev. by Steven Rose, *The Guardian*, 18 September 2004.

Brookes, who worked in the Galton lab before becoming a biographer, has tapped into a vast archive of Galtoniana, although I can't understand how his editors allowed him to get away without a single reference or even an index.

Continuum: *Loose canon: a portrait of Brian Brindley*, ed. by Damian Thompson (£16.99). Rev. by Leigh Hatts, *Church Times*, 6 August 2004.

. . . Damian Thompson . . . is a gentle editor. An incident mentioned by one contributor is enlarged on by another. But he should have insisted on an index.

Cornwall Archaeological Unit: *Diversity and vitality: the Methodist and Nonconformist chapels of Cornwall*, by Jeremy Lake, Jo Cox and Eric Berry (2001, iii + 141 pp, £15). Rev. by C. C. Short, *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, 54, October 2004.

Every now and again – thankfully rarely – a book appears that can only be described as . . . 'unreliable'.

On purchasing this book, one immediate disappointment for a publication of this type becomes apparent: the lack of an index. When will publishers realise that books that give the appearance of an authoritative reference work are emasculated by the absence of the ability to use it, that is, an index? But in making my own index the book's many errors became apparent – and perhaps it was wise not to include one after all . . . It all adds up to a lack of reliability, and perhaps, as has been suggested elsewhere, reflects a wish to hurry up the publication. I find it frustrating – and disappointing, because its publication will undoubtedly inhibit the publication of something more correct.

Hodder & Stoughton: *Lost for words: the mangling and manipulating of the English language*, by John Humphrys (2004, 334 pp, £14.99) Rev. by Paul Johnson, *Sunday Telegraph*, 21 November 2004.

Humphrys' points are usually reasonable and his book makes for easy reading, even though it is printed on poorish paper and has no index.

Rev. by Steven Poole, *The Guardian*, 4 December 2004.

Some might find it frustrating that the book whizzes so quickly through grammar, cliché, jargon and propaganda; and it is a silly economy on the publishers' part to have provided no index. [See also Christopher Phipps' review of *Lost for words on page 163*.]

Henry Holt: *Ask not: the inauguration of John F. Kennedy and the speech that changed America*, by Thurston Clarke (2004, 272 pp, \$25). Rev. by Jay Stafford, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 3 October 2004.

And the absence of an index is appalling. How any serious work of nonfiction can omit such a critical reader help is beyond comprehension.

Luath Press: *Desire lines: a Scottish Odyssey*, by David Ross (2004, £9.99). Rev. by Laurence Wareing, *The Herald* (Glasgow), 21 August 2004.

No doubt to the horror of any professional historian, Ross doesn't bother to verify his assertions or check his sources – and doesn't really care. Moreover the lack of any index means that *Desire Lines* will only really be at home stuffed into the car's glove compartment.

McArthur & Company: *From Eve to dawn: a history of women*, by Marilyn French (2004, 3 vols, £16.99 each). Rev. by Natasha Walter, *The Guardian*, 16 October 2004.

And if you wanted this to be a comprehensive encyclopedia, you would also look for more understandable decisions on what was included and what was not: why does the volume on the modern world offer 16 pages on Algeria – but only nine lines on Iran and only four negligible mentions of Afghanistan? Why do the indexes yield 11 mentions for Mary Wollstonecraft but not one for Virginia Woolf? Why is there no index at all for the first volume?

Macmillan: *The accidental American: Tony Blair and the Presidency*, by James Naughtie (2004, 272 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Ian Gilmour, *The Guardian*, 18 September 2004.

Naughtie, well-known for his broadcasts on the *Today* and other programmes and a distinguished former lobby correspondent of the *Guardian*, mainly deserts a chronological approach for a series of essays on Blair. The book is thus circular rather than linear, and there is a good deal of repetition, which is inevitably irritating. Additional minor irritations are the absence of source notes and an index.

Rev. by Simon Jenkins, *The Sunday Times*, 5 December 2004.

It has no index.

Macmillan: *My trade: a short history of British journalism*, by Andrew Marr (2004, 385 pp, £20). Rev. by Roy Greenslade, *The Guardian*, 11 September 2004.

I must, however, take the author to task for his omission of an index. I found myself composing my own as I went along . . .

Rev. by Ivan Fallon, *The Independent*, 12 September 2004.

Another little quirk, a more harmless version of Marr's front-page folly [his unconventional redesign of *The Independent's* front page], is to abandon the use of an index. It is not an oversight or due to time or cost pressure, but a deliberate omission. Why? Because he wants readers to treat it as a 'reflective and relaxed book' rather than a reference source. In fact, it makes it irritating and frustrating.

Rev. by Ian Bell, *The Herald*, 18 September 2004.

I could quibble more. The book lacks an index because he wants the text to be 'reflective and relaxed' – it is – and not a reference source. But if he does not want young journalists thumbing his pages for tips, why include mini-chapters such as 'How to be a columnist'? As a technical description of techniques for turning the porridge of opinion into 1000 palatable words, the section is very good. For that reason, I am sure, it will become a set text for journalism courses. Yet that sits oddly with Marr's motives for dispensing with an index.

Rev. by George Rosie, *Sunday Herald*, 19 September 2004.

I think Marr and his publishers made a mistake by not including an index (the sheer number of names justifies one) but that's a minor complaint. [*But one voiced by several reviewers!*]

Rev. by Roger Alton, *The Observer*, 26 September 2004.

Apart from its infuriating lack of an index, it's one of the best books about journalism I've read . . . Finally, and crucially, what is Marr playing at by not having an index. He says it is a 'deliberate omission', because he wants people to enjoy a 'reflective read' rather than use *My Trade* as a reference book. Oh, for heaven's sake, Andrew! Surely the first task of a journalist is to make things easy for the reader. The lack of an index does the opposite. So come on, Marr, in what I hope will be numerous later and updated editions, give us that index. [Roger Alton is editor of *The Observer*.]

Orchid Press: *Winds of sorrow*, by Alan Ogden (359 pp, £12.99). Rev. by John de Falbe, *The Spectator*, 20 November 2004.

However, I have two serious complaints. First, there are a staggering number of typographical mistakes. The text has obviously ever been sub-edited by a humane, only by some miserable computer spell-check programme. But most of the text is intelligible. The other sadness is the lack of an index, which makes it difficult to use the book as the work of reference that it ought to be.

Oxford University Press: *The language report*, by Susie Dent (2002, 151 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Caroline Petherick, *Editing Matters*, September/October 2004.

There is no index, so it would be difficult to use the book for reference.

Polygon: *Writing Scotland*, by Carl MacDougall (2004, 256 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Colin Waters, *Scottish Review of Books*, 1(1), 2004.

Points off however for neglecting to provide an index. [Oula Jones, who sent this item, writes, 'I couldn't believe my eyes when I picked up this book, which goes with a very high-profile TV series.']

Time Inc: *Real simple: the organized home*, ed. by Kendell Cronstrom (2004, 191 pp, \$27.95). Rev. by Liz Seymour, *Washington Post*, 30 September 2004.

We like that more than 30 percent of the book's photos never appeared in the magazine and that an outside writer was hired to put it together so the book is not a re-tread of recent cover issues. But it needs details on where to buy the stuff pictured, or at least an index in the back of the book.

Townhouse: *Booked! (v. carefully) selected writings*, by Tom Humphries (452 pp, €11.99). Rev. by Joe O'Connor, *Irish Times*, 17 April 2004.

The single bad thing about it is that it doesn't contain an index. Then again, that's a good thing, because it means you have to read all of it.

University of Wales Press: *Disasters and heroes: on war, memory and representation*, by Angus Calder (281 pp, £35 hbk, £16.99 pbk). Rev. by Keith Jeffery, *Times Literary Supplement*, 27 August 2004.

But the book could have done with an index. Perhaps the publishers thought that no one would want to revisit it or seek out a particular reference; but that is precisely one of the pleasures of a volume such as this.

Obiter dicta

What do Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon, Mussolini and Hitler have in common? . . . All are

reputed to have suffered from ailurophobia – the fear of cats . . . frankly, there aren't enough hours in my life to trawl through tomes on much-examined historical figures. Someone who has looked into the matter is Katharine MacDonogh, author of *Reigning Cats and Dogs: A History of Pets at Court Since the Renaissance* (St Martin's Press, 1999). She writes, 'No record exists of Napoleon either liking or disliking cats', and I believe her, because the book is extensively indexed, and MacDonogh is, in fact, a historian, rather than someone who just happens to like cats a great deal.

Justine Hankins, 'That sinking feline', *The Guardian*, 6 November 2004.

Bernard Levin, who has died at the age of 75 . . . was also a fervent believer in indexes, without which a book is as much use as stockings sans suspenders. His indexer was Oula Jones, based in Portobello, who, he hoped, 'rubbed her hands with glee' when told that a new book of his was on its way. Alas, no more.

Alan Taylor, *Diary*, *Sunday Herald*, 15 August 2004

Adam Smith's book *The Wealth of Nations* is a treasure trove; he really is the economist for all ages. Take any topic and he has shrewd insights. The index alone shows his qualities: Potatoes, why women who eat them are more handsome; Smuggling – tempting but ruinous; The fur trade – why Scottish beavers are extinct; Lawyers – the enormity of their fees; Wine – cheapness enhances sobriety; Scotland – pernicious tendencies explained; Idleness . . . see lawyers; Lotteries – for losers.

Leafing through the Kirkcaldy sage again this week, his advice on the proposed new M6 toll leaps out. Here it is in the index: 'Why government ought not to have the management of turnpikes.' His theme is that taxing travel will just be too tempting for the politicians.

John Blundell, *The Scotsman*, 12 July 2004

. . . I turn to the index – which, as everyone knows, is the only part of books by politicians anyone ever reads with interest – of John Redwood's *Singing the Blues: The Once and Future Conservatives* . . . 'Major, John,' begins a hefty section, 'characteristic equivocation of, 118; and difficulties with election promises, 120; discourages sensible debate in Cabinet, 131; and Europe, 22, 152, 283, 285, 295; and ERM, 98, 110–111, 124, 286; foolish decisions of, 133; lets down people, 138; makes claims in memoirs, 125; makes right decision to resign, 140–41 . . . takes wrong course of action over Maastricht, 127.' Oh dear. *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, pointy ears. When we turn to the index of Mr Major's autobiography, what do we find? 'Redwood, John: Citizen's Charter, 258; assumed to be disloyal, 342 . . .'

The Questing Vole, *The Spectator*, 16 October 2004

The index to Roy Porter's masterly [*London: a social history*] (Hamish Hamilton, 1994), is no doubt technically competent in the 'dry' sense but signally fails, at least for this reviewer, to reflect the richness of the text and serves its purpose poorly in consequence. The book would have benefited from exactly the kind of detailed and interpretive index that Bell considers appropriate for 'softer' texts.

John Edmondson, review of Hazel Bell's *Indexing Biographies*, *LOGOS*, 15(3).

Indexing my book. Fun, discovery of, in unexpected places. I had expected it to be drudgery but quite the reverse: I approach it with delight each morning, a bit like going through old photos. (Attractiveness, discovery of one's own previous, bitter-sweet sensations upon.) Gradually the picture builds up.

Perhaps that's how we really think. We don't do the index in order to navigate the text; we have to write the text so that we can compile the index. Our last thoughts are not eschatology, but *indexing*. That's how we spend our declining days: putting our lives

in alphabetical order, with cross-references.

Michael Bywater, 'Putting life in (alphabetical) order',
Independent on Sunday, 1 August 2004.

Acknowledgements

Our warm thanks to the 32 contributors to this section:

Rosemary Anderson, Lancaster
Jane Angus, Ballater
Ken Bakewell, Liverpool
Caroline Barlow, Bedford
Carolyn Bedwell, Harrow
Hazel Bell, Hatfield
Sue Bosanko, London
Pierke Bosschieter, Stitswerd, the Netherlands
Alison Brown, Glasgow
Liz Cooke, Chester-le-Street
Howard Cooke, London
Moyra Forrest, Edinburgh
Auriol Griffith-Jones, Sturminster Newton
Ann Griffiths, Birmingham

Jill Halliday, Pulham St Mary
Jennifer Harding, Milton Keynes
Oula Jones, Edinburgh
Helen Litton, Dublin
Maureen MacGlashan, Largs
Janet McKerron, Saxmundham
Jean Macqueen, Devizes
Mary Madden, Aberystwyth
Judith Menes, Consett
Ellen Miller, Cambridge, MA
Christopher Phipps, London
Paula Presley, Kirksville, MD
Kay K. Schlembach, The Woodlands, TX
Walter Schneider, Dartmouth
Pauline Sholtys, Ansonia, CT
Linda Sutherland, Irvine
Allen B. Veaner, Tucson, AZ
Janet Yarker, Catton

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 2005 and 30 November 2005.

The Clindex revisited

Knopf/Hutchinson: *My life*, by Bill Clinton (2004, 957 pp, £25).
Rev. by Ellen Gamerman, *Baltimore Sun*, 28 June 2004.

A random index scan of *My Life* yields famous names stacked between policy references, a place where only the most important get a page number. A single perusal can span the globe: What begins with Arafat, Yasser, goes to Bandar, Prince; Gore, Albert, Jr.; Imus, Don; Mandela, Nelson; Mitterrand, François; Starr, Kenneth; Streisand, Barbra.

Even Teresa, Mother.

References to the Clintons outnumber all others (i.e. 'Clinton relationship, mutual love in'), but an array of other characters appears, too. A reference is a nod to a person's importance in the Washington universe (NBC's Tim Russert is listed), while an omission can be seen as a slight. (What? No Chris Matthews from Hardball?)

In the capital's bookstores, people are searching for themselves – and not in the existential sense.

'People at cocktail parties may not talk about looking for their names, but you can bet that's what they talk about when they go home,' says former White House chief of staff Leon Panetta (pages 459–62, 488, 535, etc.).

The index of Clinton's *My Life* is 38 pages of status anxiety. Panetta considers the index-scan a must.

'To be honest,' says Panetta, 'when I get the book, I'll do the same thing.'

Some names that appear in the book – Clinton's pre-Hillary girlfriends, for example – are not referenced in the index. But in general, the list is relentless. Of all the sections of the book, it could be the most heavily read . . .

To some, the index has disappointed: Those who thumb to a particular page seeking praise or censure instead may just find a clinical report, no emotions attached, a simple recounting of a name and a job.

Washington lawyer Plato Cacheris was not surprised he

wasn't mentioned in the book – as one of Monica Lewinsky's attorneys, he didn't expect to be – but he took umbrage on behalf of Bob Bennett, one of Clinton's lawyers in the impeachment scandal. In Clinton's book, two references to Bennett mention him without editorial comment; a third reference in the index actually leads to a different Bob Bennett, a Republican senator from Utah.

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.

Rev. by Jonathan Alter, *Newsweek*, 5 July 2004.

The hottest index right now is, of course, the 'Clindex,' the list of names at the back of *My Life*, by Bill Clinton. But beware: plenty of names in the book are not in the index. In a 957-page tome, which few in Washington will read word-for-word, that's almost as bad as not being mentioned at all . . .

It turns out that the production schedule for *My Life* was so rushed that the index was cobbled together in just a few days.

Rev. by Tom Carson, *Atlantic Monthly*, September 2004.

For less ideologically goaded readers, it was an act of heroic honesty on Knopf's part – and just plain heroism, given Clinton's last-minute delivery – to provide this book with an index. Decades from now, all those fading thumbprints alongside 'Flowers, Gennifer' and 'Lewinsky, Monica' will be of use in authenticating first editions, and only true sentimentalists will leave a similar smudge next to 'Dole, Bob, 1996 election and.'