

# Indexes reviewed

Edited by Christine Shuttleworth

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*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

**Bantam:** *Kublai Khan*, by John Man (2006, 384 pp, £20). Rev. by John Ure, *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 June 2006.

Imaginative illustrations, good maps and a helpful index all conspire to keep the reader focused on a remarkable story.

**British Geological Survey:** *The Palaeogene volcanic districts of Scotland*, by C. H. Emeleus and B. R. Bell (4th edn, 2005, 212 pp, £18). Rev. by David Nowell, *Geoscientist*, June 2006.

The final chapter, on economic geology, provides some interesting asides, and there is an extensive reference list and index.

**Cambridge University Press:** *Ancient Greek ideas on speech, language and civilization*, by Deborah Levine Gera (2003, 272 pp, \$125). Rev. by Andrew L. Ford, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 12 February 2006.

Most of the passages Gera's topic brings to mind will be found to be discussed somewhere among her five topical chapters, and an excellent Index Locorum will help locate them, typically accompanied by a good selection of parallel texts and recent bibliography.

**Cambridge University Press:** *The written gospel*, ed. by Markus Bockmuehl and Donald A. Hagner (2005, 386 pp, £45 hbk, £19.99 pbk). Rev. by Anthony Harvey, *Church Times*, 31 March 2006.

The book is fully indexed, has 36 pages of bibliography, and 12 that list abbreviations, all of which confirms its usefulness as a work of reference on the present state of Gospel criticism.

**F. A. Davis:** *Medical terminology systems: a body systems approach*, by Barbara A. Gylys and Mary Ellen Wedding (5th edn, 2005, 559 pp, with audio CD). Rev. by Jonathan Jahns, *Respiratory Care*, 51(2), 2006.

This book has a thorough index that supports each of the chapters in the text. In addition, there are separate indexes for terms related to genetic disorders, diagnostic imaging procedures, pharmacology, and oncology. There is also a very thorough and complete glossary of medical word elements.

**Elsevier Academic Press:** *Essentials of medical geology: impacts of the natural environment on public health*, ed. by O. Selinus et al (2005, 812 pp, £59.99). Rev. by Ian Lancaster, *Geoscientist*, September 2005.

Although overlap is inevitable between chapters, and can frustrate efforts to build up a complete picture of an element that appears in several contexts, the index is very comprehensive and most relevant points are likely to be picked up eventually.

**Elsevier/Churchill Livingstone:** *Practical pulmonary pathology: a diagnostic approach*, by Kevin O. Leslie and Mark R. Wick (2005, 813 pp, \$275). Rev. by Joan Gil, *Respiratory Care*, May 2006.

The book is well printed, with pleasant and clear fonts, and the index – a crucial element of a consultation book – is good and lived up to my expectations almost every time I tried it.

**Facet:** *The information society: a study of continuity and change*, by John Feather (4th edn, 2004, 240 pp, £22.95). Rev. by Helen Dunford, *Australian Library Journal*, 54(4), November 2005.

It is well indexed and would be of value to students and teachers of information studies, librarianship and communication studies, as it presents examples and statistics from a number of different countries. . .

**Facet:** *The Internet and information skills: a guide for teachers and school librarians*, by James E. Herring (2004, 171 pp, £24.95). Rev. by Richard Turner, *New Library World*, 106(11/12).

A decent bibliography and index complete this useful piece of work.

**Facet:** *The library and information professional's Internet companion*, by Alan Poulter et al (2005, 200 pp, £34.95). Rev. by Elizabeth Melrose, *Library and Information Update*, 5(6), June 2006.

It is a very useful guide for students and library professionals, easy to read, with a multitude of references that can be followed up and an informative index.

**Facet:** *The new Walford: guide to references sources. Vol 1: science, technology and medicine* (2005, xix + 827 pp, £149.95). Rev. by John Sherwell, *Library and Information Update*, 5(1–2), January/February 2006.

A work on this scale cannot be checked in detail, so I decided to look at one subject area related to my current employment – ornithology. The topic index (there is also an author/title index) immediately took me to the correct section; there is also a cross-reference under 'Birds'.

**Facet:** *Science, technology and medicine*, ed. by Ray Lester (9th edn, vol. 1, 2006, 827 pp, \$395). Rev. by Melanie J. Norton, *Journal of the Medical Library Association*, July 2006.

Two indexes contain 8,000 entries, 3,000 organizations, 1,000 topics, and 250 reference tools for information professionals. The topic index is a single alphabetical listing of subject headings with cross-references. The author/title index will prove helpful for users. The table of contents, the indexes, and the systematic arrangement of topics will help anyone find what they are looking for in this volume.

**Fairleigh Dickinson University Press:** *Reading Barbara Pym*, by Deborah Donato (2005, 124 pp, \$35). Rev. by Norma Munson, *Green Leaves*, 12(1), May 2006.

A browse through the excellent index before reading the book will set the tone for its scope as well as provide pointers for future reference.

**Geological Society of London:** *The geology of Spain*, ed. by W. Gibbons and J. Morreno (2002, 349 pp. hbk £85.50, pbk £27.50). Rev. by A. W Baird, *Mineralogical Magazine*, October 2004.

The sizeable index of 40 pages makes it easy to locate descriptions of the geology of specific areas, sedimentary basins, fossil localities, geological structures, mineral deposits, etc.

**Geological Society of London:** *Understanding the micro to macro behaviour of rock-fluid systems*, ed. by R. P. Shaw (2005, 176 pp, £60.99). Rev. by Rick Brassington, *Geoscientist*, June 2006.

The book is presented to the usual high standard of the Society's Publishing House with clear illustrations and a worthwhile index.

**Harper Collins:** *Reindeer people: living with animals and spirits in Siberia*, by Piers Vitebsky (2006, 464 pp, £20). Rev. by Caroline Humphrey, *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 April 2006.

If you want to know about changing family relations, gender, the effect of the 'transition' on the reindeer economy, attitudes to the state or a host of other topics, it is all in here (you just have to use the excellent index to find it).

**Haworth Information Press:** *A guide to Slavic collections in the United States and Canada*, ed. by Allan Urbanic and Beth Feinberg (2004, 198 pp, \$19.95). Rev. by Mike Freeman, *New Library World*, 106(11/12).

A good Geographical Index enhances the usefulness of this reference work.

**Idea Group Reference:** *The encyclopedia of human computer interaction*, ed. by Claude Ghaoui (2006, 738 pp). Rev. by Jennifer Papin-Ramcharan, *Issues in Science and Technology Librarianship*, 46, Spring 2006.

Because of the excellent 10-page 'Index of Key Terms' supplied at the end of the book, the key terms and definitions are just as easy to find as if there was one listed glossary.

**Information Today Inc. :** *The accidental library manager*, by Rachel Singer Gordon (2005, 362 pp, \$29.50). Rev. by Richard Turner, *New Library World*, 106(11/12).

There is a thorough index. . .

**Kevin Mayhew:** *One church, one faith, one Lord* (revision of *Hymns old and new*, details not available). Rev. by David Ogden, *Church Music Quarterly*, March 2006.

There are thorough indexes. . .

**Lutterworth Press:** *From the dairyman's daughter to Worrals of the WAAF: The Religious Tract Society, Lutterworth Press and children's literature*, ed. by Dennis Butts and Pat Garrett (2006, 256 pp, £30). Rev. by Bridget Carrington, *IBBYLink* (published by the British branch of IBBY, International Board on Books for Young People), 17, Autumn 2006.

The numerous black and white illustrations support the text admirably, while the extensive bibliographical notes and references, together with the thorough indexing, indicate the breadth and depth of scholarship which the essays reflect.

**MIT Press:** *The access principle: the case for open access to research and scholarship*, by John Willinsky (2005, 290 pp, £22.95). Rev. by Charles Oppenheim, *Learned Publishing*, 19(2), April 2006.

The book is accompanied by six appendices providing detail (and in some cases facts and figures), and a bibliography and impressive index.

**Neal-Schumann:** *Copyright for teachers and librarians*, by Rebecca P. Butler (2004, 200 pp, US\$59.95). Rev. by D. A. Cronau, *Australian Library Journal*, 54(4), November 2005.

A detailed index in which flowcharts are bolded adds to the ready-reference nature of the book.

**Oxford University Press:** *The lives of the most eminent English poets, with critical observations on their works*, by Samuel Johnson, ed. by Roger Lonsdale (4 vols, 2006, 2200 pp, £320 the set). Rev. by H. J. Jackson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 28 April 2006.

The index of proper names (people and places) has a particularly useful set of topic subheadings under Johnson's name.

**Oxford University Press:** *Oxford handbook of palliative care*, by Max Watson et al (2005, 819 pp, \$42.50). Rev. by Darrel A. Owens, *Respiratory Care*, April 2006.

Each chapter contains an abundance of valuable information; however, the reader may find it more useful to reference the detailed index for specific clinical information.

**Penguin:** *The lore of the land: a guide to England's legends, from Spring-heeled Jack to the witches of Warboys*, by Jennifer Westwood and Jacqueline Simpson (2005, 928 pp, £30). Rev. by A. S. Byatt, *Guardian*, 21 January 2006.

The cross-referencing and the excellent index mean that the book can be read county by county, theme by theme, or wildly at random, following up references that catch the imagination.

Rev. by Philip Crispin, *The Tablet*, 11 March 2006.

The book's clear cross-referencing and its excellent index make it easy to peruse the book thematically, and to home in on, say, giants, or 'wells and bells'.

**W. B. Saunders:** *End-of-life care: clinical practice guidelines for the advanced practice nurse*, by Kim Kuebler, Patricia Berry and Debra Heidrich (2002, 350 pp, \$49.95). Rev. by Deanna Hutchings, *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 11(12), 2005.

There are additional beneficial features: a compendium of electronic resources; a thorough index and an appendix that provides medical prognostic guidelines for non-cancer diagnoses such as end-stage renal disease or dementia.

**Springer-Verlag:** *Amazing numbers in biology*, by Rainer Flindt (2006, 309 pp, £19.95). Rev. by Adrian Barnett, *BBC Wildlife Magazine*, July 2006.

*Amazing Numbers* is better than googling, because it has a sensible index and you don't have to wade through a whole load of irrelevance to get to what you want. [But as Richard Northedge pointed out on *SIdleline*, 9 July 2006, 'It doesn't make much sense to me to compare a back-of-the-book index to the Google search engine, because they are attempting to do radically different things. . . . But rather than meaning "googling", perhaps the reviewer instead intended to compare the experience of accessing content on the web to accessing content in the book – people often seem to confuse the search engine with the web itself. In which case, there are advantages and disadvantages to both. . . . When the sought information is in a single, defined problem domain and a well-indexed book on that subject is at hand, of course the book is more useful. Why is this remarkable? The web has its own, different strengths.']

**University of Hawai'i Press:** *Broken trust: greed, mismanagement and political manipulation at America's largest charitable trust*, by Samuel S. King and Randall W. Roth (2006, 324 pp, \$26/\$16). Rev. by Eve Lichtgarn, [www.associatedcontent.com](http://www.associatedcontent.com).

Kudos for the superior index, which is a necessary tool for keeping tabs on the hefty cast of characters here. [*Index by ASI member Jan Williams.*]

**UVK Verlagsgesellschaft:** *Verlagswirtschaft: Ökonomische, rechtliche und organisatorische Grundlagen*, by Wulf-Dietrich von Lucius (2005, 368 pp, £19.90). Rev. by Klaus G. Saur, *LOGOS*, 17(2), July 2006.

The index is extensive, and the book can be used as a desk reference.

**Yale University Press:** *London: a musical gazetteer*, by Lewis Foreman and Susan Foreman (2005, 371 pp, £15.99). Rev. by Diana Dixon, *Library & Information Update*, 5(6), June 2006.

The index is commendably helpful.

## Two cheers!

**Cambridge University Press:** *The Cambridge companion to Liszt*, ed. by Kenneth Hamilton (2005, 282 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Adrian Jack, *BBC Music Magazine*, December 2005.

Although the *Companion* carries a chronology and an index of works as well as a general index, there might have been a select list of contemporary characters, or at any rate more helpful footnotes – a casual reference to Fétis would surely puzzle the general reader, and why is Princess Carolyn sometimes ‘zu’ and at other times ‘von’ Wittgenstein?

**Carcanet:** *Cuts and bruises: personal terms – 3*, by Frederic Raphael (2006, 224 pp, £14.95). Rev. by Michael Lister, *Times Literary Supplement*, 21 July 2006.

It is a little subversive of Carcanet to provide a name index, whose only function can be to help locate more readily the names that Raphael has dropped. Perhaps this more to satisfy those, about whom the author has written elsewhere, ‘who look first in the index of their contemporaries’ books to see if they are cited. It is better to be abused than ignored.’

**Tempus:** *Monastic landscapes*, by James Bond (2004, 384 pp, £25). Rev. by Lawrence Butler, *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 85, 2005.

The index has often been an inadequate aspect of this particular publisher, but there is little to criticize here. [*Faint praise . . .*]

## Indexes censured

**Atlantic:** *Cobra II: the inside story of the invasion and occupation of Iraq*, by Michael Gordon and Bernard Trainor (2006, 603 pp, £25). Rev. by Hugh McManners, *Sunday Times*, 30 April 2006.

Unfortunately the index lists only names of people, omitting places and, most importantly, military units.

**Boydell Press:** *William of Malmesbury*, by Rodney M. Thomson (2003, xiii + 239 pp, £30). Rev. by Richard W. Pfaff, *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 85, 2005.

The General Index (highly important in a volume consisting of originally disparate pieces) is a bit skimpy.

**Brill (Leiden):** *Encyclopedia of women and Islamic culture, vol. 1: methodologies, paradigms and sources*, ed. Suad Joseph (2003, 700 pp). Rev. by Larry Conradi, *Der Islam*, 82, 2005.

Finally, for such a broadly conceived work that is bound to be complex and difficult to use, the index is entirely inadequate. Professional standards of indexing suggest that a good index should be

about a tenth of the size of the book it covers, and insist that long strings of numbers must be avoided — such strings reveal places where sub-entries need to be provided. The index to *EWIC I* is very short in comparison to the size of the volume, many important items have been missed out entirely, and quite a few entries bear long lists of page numbers. The indices [*sic*] to the Bibliography are far superior to those for the volume itself.

**Cambridge University Press:** *The Cambridge companion to Homer*, ed. by Robert Fowler (2004, 419 pp, £45 hbk, £18.99 pbk). Rev. by Richard Rutherford, *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 February 2006.

The book is full of good things, and it will be a rare scholar who does not find something new in the generous bibliography. . . . The index is less carefully done, and some quite important entries (e.g. on Hesiod) are short-changed.

**Cambridge University Press:** *The Cambridge Mozart encyclopaedia*, ed. by Cliff Eisen and Simon P. Keefe (2006, 662 pp, £95). Rev. by Clifford Bartlett, *Early Music Review*, 111, February 2006.

The editors encourage readers to consult the index. That is, however, hard work, since entries are not subdivided. J. S. Bach is mentioned on 24 pages: it shouldn’t be necessary to look them all up if all one wants to find is whether the story of Mozart surrounding himself by parts of motets in St Thomas Leipzig is a myth. There are 17 lines of unsorted page-numbers for Leopold (or rather Johann Leopold Georg) Mozart. It’s a pity that more effort (and space) was not taken in maximising the uses to which this excellent encyclopaedia can be put.

**Chandos Publishing Oxford:** *Knowledge management: an integrative approach*, by Meliha Handzic and Albert Z. Zhou (2005, 172 pp, £57). Rev. by Mandy Webster, *FreePint*.

Some of the tables refer to case studies simply by name as illustrating a particular approach to KM, but it is difficult to then locate the case studies as some, but not all, are listed in the index. The index itself is too short at only two pages.

**Chatto & Windus:** *The siege of Venice*, by Jonathan Keates (2005, 512 pp, £20). Rev. by John Julius Norwich, *BBC History Magazine*, 7(1), January 2006.

My only quarrel is with the index: writing 30 or 40 page numbers one after the other with no indication of their reference is a gross dereliction of duty.

**Clarendon Press (Oxford Historical Monographs Series):** *Modernizing nature: forestry and imperial eco-development 1800–1950*, by S. Ravi Rajan (2006, 286 pp, £60). Rev. in Andrew Jones, *Fine, scholarly and out-of-print books, Catalogue 145: History*, June 2006.

When a good friend, in this case Anna, volunteers to compile your index, the proper answer is ‘No’: to those that have not played the game before, capital letters have a magnetic attraction – but such entries as ‘Asia’, ‘England’, ‘Prime Minister, British’ and ‘Lord Mayor of London’ serve no purpose; ‘Grey, Lord Earl’ suggests that we weren’t on nodding terms over a cup of tea with Albert or Sir Edward, and ‘Priestley, INITIALS’ is a despairing cry which Joseph did not answer. Does no-one at OUP check anything?

**Faber:** *The selected letters of Michael Tippett*, ed. by Thomas Schuttenhelm (2005, 400 pp, £25). Rev. by Hugh Wood, *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 March 2006.

The biographical index is woefully incomplete, and the page references are all over the place.

**Haworth Information Press:** *Metadata: a cataloger's primer*, ed. by Richard P. Smiraglia (2005, 303 pp, £28.50). Rev. by J. H. Bowman, *Library & Information Update*, 5(7-8), July/August 2006.

In the index there are far too many undifferentiated page-references, for example, under Dublin Core, and clearly the compiler has never heard of 'double-posting', as there are numerous cross-references which take up far more space than inserting the relevant page numbers again would have done.

**Horizon Bio-Science:** *Microbe-host interface in respiratory tract infections*, ed. by Jan L. L. Kimpen and Octavio Ramilo (2005, 340 pp, £85). Rev. by W. Conrad Liles, *Respiratory Care*, March 2006.

The overall appeal of this book is diminished by a number of curious omissions and deficiencies. Despite the well-recognized and critical role of dendritic cells in the host response to pulmonary pathogens, the term 'dendritic cell' is not in the index, and dendritic cells are not specifically discussed in the text. [*In other words, comments Carolyn Weaver, who sent this item, 'the index is criticized for not including what the author omitted. Which supports my contention that cross-references are among the most important elements in index usability. I'd love to see this book just to find out if dendritic cells are truly omitted, or actually discussed using different terminology.'*]

*Journal of the Kerry Historical and Archaeological Society*. Rev. by John Bradley, *Archaeology Ireland*, 19(4), winter 2005.

Two issues . . . have appeared during the past year, both up to its usual high standards and particularly commendable for the inclusion of an index, a feature that was once a commonplace but which the *Kerry Journal* is now the only one to uphold.

**Jessica Kingsley:** *Goodbye Mr Wonderful: alcoholism, addiction and early recovery*, by Chris McCully (2004, 237 pp, £13.95). Rev. by Lindsey Coombes, *Community Practitioner*, 79(3), March 2006.

I did not always find the index very helpful (if the reader looks up 'cannabis' for example they will find that this is linked to a short statement on page 77 that 'the personal use of cannabis has effectively been de-criminalised'). [*So what's wrong with that?*]

**William Morrow:** *The great deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast*, by Douglas Brinkley (2006, 716 pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Dante Ramos, *Los Angeles Times*, 7 May 2006.

Even the book's index is tendentious. The entry for 'Nagin, Ray' lists such subtopics as 'abandonment of New Orleans by', 'breakdown of', 'mistakes and failures of', 'paranoia of', 'personal responsibility and guilt of' and 'special-needs residents neglected by'.

**Oxford University Press:** *Bombay to Bloomsbury: a biography of the Strachey family*, by Barbara Caine (2005, 506 pp, £25). Rev. by Sarah H. Hall and Lynne Newland, *Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain Bulletin*, 21 January 2006.

Gerald Brenan is misspelled 'Brennan' in the index; and there are three differently-spelled variants of Alix Sargant-Florence (pp. 2, 140, in the family tree, and in the index), although her brother is spelled and hyphenated correctly. . . . We are sorry to have to mention the book's faults, as we liked it very much, and were prepared to forgive the author because of the vast amount of material she had to marshal in the process of her research. She might have been justified, moreover, in expecting the copyeditor, proofreader or indexer to pick up some of the inconsistencies and repetitions during the process of editing.

**Oxford University Press:** *J. D. Bernal: the sage of science*, by Andrew Brown (2005, 576 pp, £25). Rev. by Gordon Fraser, *Physics World*, February 2006.

One pity is that the index is incomplete, which is unfortunate for a book that provides such valuable material on the history of science in the 20th century.

**Oxford University Press:** *The syringe driver: continuous subcutaneous infusions in palliative care*, by Andrew Dickman, Jennifer Schneider and James Varga (2nd edn, 2006, 176 pp, £24.95). Rev. by Suzanne Hammond, *International Journal of Palliative Nursing*, 11(11), 2005.

I found the index to the second edition somewhat less user-friendly than the first edition, e.g. there was no direct index entry for 'diluent' or 'site irritation' in the later edition.

**Oxford University Press:** *Writers, readers and reputations*, by Philip Waller (2006, 1181 pp, £85). Rev. by A. N. Wilson, *The Spectator*, 17 June 2006.

One other cavil, and a more serious one. Oxford University Press should pay someone to make a much more detailed index. There are over 40 references to Thackeray, for example, some where he is mentioned in passing and others rich in anecdote, such as his wanting to have corn-sheaves carved by the front door of his house in Kensington (now the Israeli embassy) which he built from the profits of being editor of the *Cornhill Magazine*. (He barely lived to see the house completed.)

**Penguin:** *The secret life of trees*, by Colin Tudge (2006, 464 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 8 July 2006.

A wonderful book, if a pity that Penguin didn't put more effort into the index. [*What was wrong with it? More information, please.*]

**Routledge:** *The Guy Liddell diaries*, ed. by Nigel West (2 vols, £50). Rev. by M. R. D. Foot, *The Spectator*, 19 November 2005.

. . . of enormous interest for their context – Liddell was MI5's wartime head of counter-espionage – even if their indexer thought Neville Chamberlain was still alive in 1941.

**Weidenfeld & Nicolson:** *Yiddish civilisation: the rise and fall of a forgotten nation*, by Paul Kriwaczek (2006, 347 pp, £25). Rev. by Joseph Sherman, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 February 2006.

Index and citations are wholly inadequate. A quotation from Rashi is identified only as 'Rashi: *responsa* no. 159', while the source of a fiat from Elizabeth I's foreign secretary Walsingham is named only as 'English State Papers'.

## Indexes omitted

**Black Ltd:** *Eyewitness: Australians write from the front-line*, ed. by Garrie Hutchison (2005, 442 pp, \$35). Rev. by Thomas Lewis, *Canberra Times*, 17 December 2005.

There is no index to *Eyewitness*, and I thought this might have been useful, for such a comprehensive set of stories might well prove a useful reference work.

**Bloomsbury:** *City of oranges: Arabs and Jews in Jaffa*, by Adam LeBor (2006, 384 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Mark Cocker, *Guardian*, 21 January 2006.

The dramatis personae with which LeBor individualises the history of Israel/Palestine is extremely long, and one has to work to keep track of the complex family relations. Therefore the omission of an index was a poor misjudgment by his publishers.

**Cambridge University Press:** *Crusader art in the Holy Land: from the Third Crusade to the fall of Acre 1187–1291*, by Jaroslav Folda

(2006, 714 pp, £85). Rev. by Alexander Murray, *Times Literary Supplement*, 23 June 2006.

At this point, the still-incredulous will wish to look up a familiar artefact, only to discover the volume has no index, and (in this mood) will prepare a fatwa against the Cambridge University Press for having allowed it. Patience, however, will be rewarded. First, there must be no fatwa: the Press has apparently noticed its omission, had two indices [*sic*] made, and will supply them on its website to anyone who purchased the book.

**Cannwood Press:** *Steel wheels*, by Andy Garnett (2005, 288 pp, £18.50). Rev. by Simon Jenkins, *Guardian*, 10 March 2006.

It is rambling and woefully underillustrated. It also qualifies for my list of crimes still meriting capital punishment in lacking an index. But no matter, this is the most splendid evocation of one man's total absorption in his hobby.

**Constable & Robinson:** *Plundering the private sector*, by David Craig with Richard Brooks (2006, 320 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Peter Osborne, *The Spectator*, 8 July 2006.

It is greatly to be regretted that they have not provided an index.

**Ebury Press:** *Pete Doherty: last of the rock romantics*, by Alex Hannaford (2006, 352 pp, £16.99). Rev. in *Private Eye*, 3–16 March 2006.

Doherty is only 26 so his CV is necessarily a bit spartan, but there is no interview with Doherty himself, no notes or index from which to examine Hannaford's sources and most of the quotes appear to come from newspaper cuts.

**Gracewing:** *Christianity in Iraq*, by Suha Rassam (2005, 260 pp, £9.99). Rev. by John Brown, *Church Times*, 30 June 2006.

The tables at the beginning are very helpful; and I regret only that there is no index.

**Granta:** *The outlaw sea: chaos and crime on the world's oceans*, by William Langewiesche (2006, 256 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 4 February 2006.

There's no index, which is crazy.

**Hamish Hamilton:** *Jacob's gift: a journey into the heart of belonging*, by Jonathan Freedland (2005, 344 pp, £20). Rev. by Hazel Bell, *Newbooks*, issue 33, May/June 2006.

But oh dear, how any discussion would be hampered by the book's lack of an index. So many good things, high spots, lurking in the many pages, that one would want to refer to in discussion, or find again through sheer fascination. Truly a wonderful hoard of treasures sadly buried.

**Harvill:** *Midnight in Sicily*, by Peter Robb (1999, 336 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Michael S. Swisher, [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), 23 September 2002.

The book's one telling defect is its lack of an index, which would have been quite useful.

**Lewin Press:** *Taking stock: the first sixty years*, by Humphrey Clucas (196 pp, £9.99). *Serendipity: A country cathedral organist looks back*, by David Gedge (281 pp, £12.95). Rev. in *Church Music Quarterly* (date not available).

... a drawback of both these autobiographies is that neither has provided an index. When hundreds of musicians are mentioned and one might be looking for mention of a particular person, one has to read the whole book.

**Little, Brown:** *Passionate minds: the great Enlightenment love affair*, by David Bodanis (2006, 312 pp, £17.99). Rev. by Patricia Fara, *Guardian*, 10 June 2006.

Furthermore, there is no index.

Rev. in *The Economist*, 20–26 May 2006.

The book may strike some readers as slightly lubricious in its attention to Emilie [du Chatelet]'s sexual habits and predilections. A more serious shortcoming, explicable only by authorial laziness (unlikely) or publisher's stinginess (all too probable) is the startling and inconvenient lack of an index. That is just the sort of slap-happy approach to which Voltaire was prone, and which so pained Emilie.

**Madison Press/Scholastic Canada:** *Backyard birds: an introduction*, by Robert Bateman with Ian Coutts (2005, 48 pp, C\$19.99). Rev. by Michele Landsberg, *Quill & Quire*, December 2005.

The one startling flaw in this fine work is the absence of either a contents page or an index, although Bateman does offer a simple ornithological glossary at the end.

**Mainstream:** *Andy Murray: the story so far*, by Bob Robertson and Eleanor Preston (329 pp, £10.99). Rev. by Veronica Lee, *Observer*, 18 June 2006.

My two cavils are the absence of an index and a superfluous chapter about a set Murray played against his hero, John McEnroe, in a meaningless competition, an anecdote worth a few paragraphs.

**Harvey Miller:** *The Thornham parva retable: technique, conservation and context of an English medieval painting*, ed. by Ann Massing (2003, 238 pp, £87.50). Rev. by Pamela Tudor-Craig, *Antiquaries Journal*, **85**, 2005.

Next time, may we have an index, the only omission in an array of scholarly apparatus in this fine book?

**Mineral Association of Canada:** *Mercury sources, measurements, cycles and effects*, by M. B. Parsons and J. B. Percival (320 pp, Cdn\$40, US\$40). Rev. by R. A. Wogelius, *Mineralogical Magazine*, December 2005.

My only real criticism is that the book lacks an index. Because there is a fair amount of overlap between the chapters, it is sometimes difficult to find exactly the section you want to refer back to, and an index would have helped immensely.

**John Murray:** *Passage to the Torres Strait*, by Miles Hordern (£9.99). Rev. by Ross Leckie, *The Times*, 24 June 2006.

Marred by the lack of an index, this book brims with curious and enchanting facts.

**Oberon Books:** *The Ring: an illustrated history of Wagner's Ring at the Royal Opera House*, by John Snelson (2006, 162 pp, £35). Rev. by Andrew Porter, *Times Literary Supplement*, 19 May 2006.

There is, alas, no index, just ten blank pages at the end, and this makes the book less valuable as a work of reference. When reading it, use the blank pages to keep track of passages, pictures, or facts you may want to refer to again.

**Oxford University Press:** *The Oxford history of western music* (vol. 1), by Richard Taruskin (854 pp, £425 the six-volume set). Rev. by Christopher Page, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 February 2006.

Taken on its own, without reference to the other volumes in the set, the first impression is that this book does many big things in its 854

pages but is curiously reluctant to do the small things that would be helpful to any reader who wished to invest in this volume as a free-standing textbook of medieval and Renaissance musical history. . . . the book has no index, no bibliography and no suggestions for further reading, since all the reference matter of real substances is apparently contained in the final volume entitled *Resources: Chronology, Bibliography, Master Index*. [But Paul Griffiths, reviewing the full set in *The Nation*, 6 March 2006, reported: 'The index is risible.']

**Pan American Health Organization:** *Youth: choices and change*, by Cecilia Breinbauer and Matilde Maddaleno (2005, 392 pp, CHF (Swiss francs) 50). Rev. by Peter Byass, *Bulletin of the World Health Organization*, 84(6), June 2006.

At a practical level, there are some niggles about the book. Although it has a good list of references and web resources, there is no index! For a huge and complex work like this, it is frustrating to have to search the whole volume for a particular topic.

**Peterloo Poets:** *Collected poems 1978–2003*, by U. A. Fanthorpe (2006, 468 pp, £25). Rev. by John Greening, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 2006.

The volume itself feels strangely old-fashioned, with some quirks of presentation (a foreword squeezed against the flyleaf; an acknowledgements page with nothing on it but the Arts Council logo; no index of titles or first lines) and a few too many misprints; but it is eminently readable.

**Picador:** *An end to suffering: the Buddha in the world*, by Pankaj Mishra (2005, 448 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Ross Leckie, *The Times*, 7 January 2006.

It lacks nothing – except an index.

**Ravenhall Press:** *Regency recollections: Captain Gronow's guide to life in London and Paris*, ed. by Christopher Summerville (2006, 224 pp, £16.99). Rev. by David McKie, *Guardian*, 27 July 2006.

. . . to find your way round you need an index; and there isn't one. Which may be why I can't find my favourite Gronow story, the one where blundering Lord Westmorland – required while visiting the court of the king of France to attempt the king's language – utters the sentence: 'Je voudrais si je coudrais, mais je cannais pas.'

**RMIT University Press:** *Catch the wave: how to find good information on the Internet – fast*, by Belinda Weaver (2003, 270 pp, Aus\$44). Also available online for subscribers to Informit e-Library: [www.informit.com.au/browse-info\\_product\\_elibrary.html](http://www.informit.com.au/browse-info_product_elibrary.html). Rev. by Sherrey Quinn and Ian McCallum, *Online Currents*, 19(1), January/February 2004.

The only navigation aids are the table of contents and the paragraph headings (liberally applied). URLs are listed throughout, but only the Introduction and Chapter 8 (The Invisible Web) give references (two each) for further reading. There is no index, so no way to quickly find the references to a particular source (e.g., archives of various types), or that piece of Internet jargon (e.g., 'blog') that you know was defined somewhere in the book. Absence of an index is regrettable in a book with such quality content. The book is also available electronically to subscribers, and perhaps an index was thought unnecessary by the publisher because in electronic format the text can be searched. Whatever the reason for the omission, a good index adds value (even to electronic books) and we suggest that RMIT Press correct this oversight in the next edition.

**K. G. Saur:** *Bibliothekswissenschaft (Library Science) – quo vadis?*, ed. by Petra Hauke (2005, 480 pp, €75). Rev. by Alison Wilson, *Library & Information Update*, 5(7-8), August 2006.

On the whole, this is a book for the German market. . . . It is most likely to be dipped into by the English reader with a special interest. . . . What a pity then, that there is no index in either language, and that the English abstracts are arranged alphabetically by author, not in the order in which the papers appear.

**Scribe:** *Striking back: the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre and Israel's deadly response*, by Aaron J. Klein (2005, 256 pp, Aus\$ 29.95). Rev. by Tom Frame, *Canberra Times*, 15 April 2006.

If I have any criticism of Klein's account (other than the lamentable absence of an index) it is the complete lack of any moral critique of 'Israel's deadly response'.

**Shaw & Sons:** *Conflicts in the countryside: the new battle for Britain*, by David Bellamy (2005, 240 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Kate Ashbrook, *Walk* (magazine of the Ramblers' Association) 9, winter 2005.

He wrongly claims that the National Trust was 'our first campaigning body' and the book also suffers from the lack of an index.

**Spellmount:** *Dennis Wheatley: Churchill's storyteller*, by Craig Cabell (2005, 266 pp, £20). Rev. by Phil Baker, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 May 2006.

The scholarly apparatus is sub-standard. . . . There is no index or proper bibliography. . .

**Tate Publishing:** *Snapshots of Bloomsbury: the private lives of Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell*, by Maggie Humm (2006, £25). Rev. by Sarah M. Hall, *Bulletin of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain*, 22, May 2006.

The only major criticism I have to make is about the omission of an index: it seems to me that every non-fiction book should have one, and it would aid the reader greatly to be able to look up who is featured in the book, and in what context.

**United College of the Ascension:** *Reconciling mission: the ministry of healing and reconciliation in the Church worldwide*, ed. by Kirsteen Kim (£5). Rev. by Marcus Braybrooke, *Church Times*, 17 February 2006.

There is a good bibliography, but no index.

**Yale University Press:** *A little history of the world*, by E. H. Gombrich (2005, 280 pp, £14.99). Rev. by John Whale, *Church Times*, 17 February 2006.

He was not writing a work of reference: no room in 280 pages for bibliography or index.

**Yorkshire Archaeological Society/Boydell Press:** *Bradford Poor Law Union: papers and correspondence with the Poor Law Commission October 1834–January 1839*, Vol. CLVIII, ed. Paul Carter (2004, £40). Rev. in *Ancestors*, May 2005.

Unfortunately, lack of an effective index or lists of contents hinders access to this important historical resource.

## Obiter dicta

**Abacus:** *Two lives*, by Vikram Seth (2006, 512 pp, £8.99).

One of the dangers of writing an enormously long book is that you might forget where you put everything. At the Hay Festival, Vikram Seth could not find a particular passage from his *Twin lives* [sic]. 'It's around page 393,' shouted a helpful member of his audience. Hugo Rifkind, 'People' column, *The Times*, 8 June 2006.

[No wonder the author couldn't find the passage – the book, a biography, actually called *Two lives, has no index.*]

**Atlantic Books:** *Sherlock Holmes: the biography*, by Nick Rennison (2005, 240 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Peter Lewis, *The Oldie*, March 2006.

A glance at the index whets the appetite. Holmes and the attempted assassination of Queen Victoria at her Golden Jubilee celebrations; Holmes and the Cleveland Street scandal; Holmes and the blackmail of Swinburne; Holmes and the womanising 'King of Scandinavia' and much much more, in dizzying detail.

**Little Books:** *Watching: encounters with humans and other animals*, by Desmond Morris (2006, 624 pp, £20). Rev. by Helen Brown in *The Daily Telegraph*, 24 June 2006.

The index of Desmond Morris's autobiography reads like a guest list for a surreal knees-up at London Zoo. The zoologist, ethnologist and painter who first came to public attention presenting ITV's *Zootime* in the 1960s has filed Ursula Andress beneath An-An (the panda). The bird-eating spider sits opposite Anthony Burgess, Brigitte Bardot and Marlon Brando. Moving through the crowd of names you'll pass 'donkey-faced girls', Donna the drug-sniffing dog and Morris's first girlfriend, Diana Dors. The promised entertainment includes a tiger toucher, a papal audience, bullfighting and lapdancing.

**Oxford University Press:** *A chronology and calendar of documents relating to the London book trade, 1641–1700*, by D. F. McKenzie and Maureen Bell (2005, 3 vols, 1569 pp, £85 each vol.) Rev. by Joad Raymond, *Times Literary Supplement*, 7 July 2006.

The volumes share three indices [*sic*]: name, title and topic. These refer back to the text through dates rather than volume/page numbers. Though initially slow, this is enormously useful, as it enables the absorption of some information (the frequency and chronological clustering) at a glance. . . . The study can be read in a linear fashion – like other kinds of chronology – for a biography of the book trade in a particular year. But for the most part it will be read via the indices.

One can try to obtain an impressionistic overview of the book trade through the topic index. There are fewer entries under the heading 'author' than under 'Assembly of Divines'. The numerous sub-entries under 'author' include: 'payment requested by', 'recantation', 'selling own books', 'unwilling to own books', 'scandalum magnatum', 'money due', 'assistance sought'. Some of the headings suggest starting points for future research: accounts and account books, burning of books (a long heading), useful entries on paper and its importation, petitions by and on behalf of stationers and their wives (who petitioned more than authors). Under 'accidents/illnesses of stationers', we find 'dropsy', 'disabled by age' and 'thumb blown off'.

The many entries under 'sermons' suggest ways in which literary historians might use these volumes, though 'poetry, books of' has few entries; alarmingly few when compared with 'popish books'. Some entries are unsatisfactorily systematized: under 'Muslim books' there is no entry, only a cross-reference to 'Mahomitan religion, books of the', which has a single entry. But the title index also mentions 'Alcoran, Turkish', which has a further four. Other topics are more transparent: 'Toyseller/bookseller (with whores)' refers to a 1676 quarrel between a part-toyseller and part-book-seller and his wife, who found him in bed with two prostitutes. There is no entry under 'whores'.

**Penguin:** *The divine comedy I: Inferno*, by Dante Alighieri, transl. and ed. by Robin Kirkpatrick (2006, 576 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 25 March 2006.

Now, another Cambridge don has plunged into *The Divine Comedy* and come up with the first instalment of what promises to be the

new, definitive, three-volume edition for anglophones. . . . And if the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso* are as good as this, then English readers will, I hope, start familiarising themselves with the two-thirds of the work most never get round to reading. I do hope, though, that the final volume has an index. It's handy for knowing who's been sent where.

**Penguin/Michael Joseph:** *Out of my comfort zone*, by Steve Waugh (2006, 832 pp, £25). Rev. by Matthew Engel, *FT Magazine*, 3/4 June 2006.

Amid the overwhelming detail, there is much sound cricketing sense. But I suspect that this book will be best remembered for the index entry on English cricket: '. . . fear of Australia, lack of self-belief, lack of total commitment, local negativity, no fun, poor fielding . . .'.

**Routledge:** *Contemporary translation theories*, by Edwin Gentzler (1993, 240 pp, £11.95). Rev. by Steve Cox, *In Other Words* (journal of the Translators Association), 5 June 1995.

It may be beside the point that not a single passage of translation is used to explain or even illustrate the versions of translation presupposed by the theories discussed here. If a translator consults the index for words like paragraph, sentence, rhythm, repetition, irony, syllable, ambiguity – each one a daily concern in Translation Practice – and fails to find them, it must be because this is not the place to look for them.

**Thames & Hudson:** *The art of the Picts: sculpture and metalwork in early medieval Scotland*, by George Henderson and Isabel Henderson (2004, 256 pp, £42). Rev. by Jane Geddes, *Antiquaries Journal*, 85, 2005.

This book is not intended as a gentle introduction for beginners. In the first chapter alone, the reader is expected to be familiar with over forty unillustrated comparisons. It is constructed as a narrative dealing with profound concepts. As a consequence, should the reader wish to analyse a particular stone, a swift search of the index will not always provide the explanation.

**Thoemmes Continuum:** *Elizabethan poetry: a bibliography and first-line index of English verse, 1559–1603* (3 vols), by Steven W. May and William A. Ringler, Jr (2337 pp, £495). Rev. by Brian Vickers, *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 February 2006.

The most remarkable feature of *Elizabethan Poetry* is its 110-page index of rhyme schemes and verse forms, surely the largest such inventory ever made. The individual entries for each poem record in short form the number of lines, the number of stanzas and their length, the rhyme scheme and meter, together with recurrent features, the burden (lines that begin and are repeated after each stanza of a carol) and the refrain.

#### *Alphabeticization's artful aid*

To avoid being confused by the letter's unfamiliar catechistic structure, it helps to arrange its four thousand translated words in alphabetical order, which makes the whole thing read more straightforwardly. There's a certain amount of fiery grandiloquence ('abandon abduction abide ablaze'), but there are also moments of telegraphic irony ('administration's advised advocated affairs affected Afghanistan') and moments of pathos ('forcing foreign forgiveness'). An alphabeticised Bush also comes across much more poetically than the one we're used to: in January's State of the Union address his mention of 'faithful faithful fallen fallen falling Fallujah' was remarkably to the point. It isn't so clear what he meant when he said 'eliminate elite embryos'. Was this evidence of new thinking on *Roe v. Wade*?

The artist Simon Popper would like the Ahmadinejad letter. He has printed 1,000 copies of *Ulysses*, bound in dark green paper, with the words alphabetically arranged. The first five pages are taken up with the letter 'a', but it soon takes off into pleasing Joycean babble. 'Mamma mamma Mamma Mamma mammal MAMMA-MUFFLERED mammary': that sort of thing. The closing pages are a long sequence of very pretty punctuation marks.

Daniel Soar, Short cuts, *London Review of Books*, 25 May 2006, on a letter sent by the Iranian Foreign Ministry to Washington on 8 May 2006

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*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 November 2006 and 30 May 2007.*

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## Book reviews

Edited by Maureen MacGlashan and Frances Lennie

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**Spellbound.** James Essinger. London: Robson Books, 2006. 254 pp. ISBN 1-86105-906-X (hbk): £9.99.

From the earliest days of writing, those who had mastered it were thought by the rest of society to be possessed of a magical skill, but we don't need to believe in magic to appreciate how important writing and spelling are. Just as today we use 'spell' to mean a magical formula that has full potency only if all its elements are put together in the right way, so 'spelling' requires that letters be set down in the correct order. A writing system with a range of varying spellings may not always communicate information as accurately as a system in which there is only one accepted form. If we are going to write, as the author of *Spellbound* observes, we had better write accurately; otherwise our spells may not work.

James Essinger's book, whimsically jacketed to resemble the sort of time-stained volume that might be found on the shelves of the library at Hogwarts, is divided into three parts. Part one discusses the relative merits of alphabetic, logographic and phonetic systems of writing; part two looks at where the alphabet we use today came from. Part three – the entire second half of the book – investigates the spelling issue.

Although hybrid modern English spelling may seem illogical, it is not without certain patterns, and these are not without their justifications. In view of our varied island history, our language could indeed be a great deal more complicated. However, the effect of the Anglo-Saxons' Old English coming into contact with Norman French in 1066 was to simplify the grammar of both languages over time, and since about the 15th century English has been almost devoid of what Mr Essinger considers 'unnecessary' grammatical factors: modern English has a fairly simple system for forming verb tenses and its nouns have no grammatical gender.

Our grammar may thus be seen as comparatively simple, but our spelling remains a minefield of heterogeneous letter combinations. A major reason for this is that, unlike some other languages that have tended to normalize the spellings of imported and adopted words to follow native patterns or create entirely new words of their own for novel concepts, English has largely retained its borrowings in their original forms. It is therefore not surprising that we have today such thoroughgoing inconsistency.

Despite all the trouble our spelling conventions may give us, Mr Essinger concludes that there are two principal arguments for why it is folly to consider wholesale spelling reforms that are not led by popular usage. The first is that, once the basic skill is mastered, the majority of readers very quickly make rapid, even almost instinctive, associations between the way a word looks on the page and a particular meaning. This being so, the illogicality of English spelling is not a serious hindrance to communication once the spelling system has been learnt. If this argument sidesteps the problem of learning it in the first place, the author's second point is far more compelling: a new way of spelling would deprive us of the rich cultural heritage represented by the current English spelling system: 'The English writing system is, in effect, a daily reminder of the heritage of the English-speaking people, and we have every right to be proud of it.'

Much of what this book contains may be known to readers from school language lessons, from academic study or from years at the workforce, but who would have thought that the word with the longest definition in the second edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* is the verb 'to set', with 'over 430 senses and consisting of approx. 60,000 words or 326,000 characters' – the length of an average novel? Certainly not I. And while I may have known that 'Ye' (as in 'Ye Olde . . .') derives from the Anglo-Saxon letter 'thorn', which resembled a 'Y', I had not appreciated that it remained in favour with stonemasons into the 19th century for its economy of both headstone space and chisel cuts. There is a great deal in the book both to entertain and to edify.

A book about spelling is inevitably vulnerable to criticism of its own correctness in that respect, and this book unfortunately falters in a number of awkward places. When the author is describing how in the early days of printing it was not uncommon to find the same word spelt different ways within the same book, we are given the name of Caxton's colleague as 'Collard Mansion' and 'Colard Mansion' on adjacent pages. We are elsewhere told that 'broach' in the sense of a fashion accessory derives from Norman French, and that the Romans, from whom we derived so many of our words and spellings, lived on the 'Italian peninsular'. These saddened me as a copy-editor and proofreader. That the book has only a very rudimentary index bothered me less, as it is essentially a book of