

# 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 readers have sent in. Our reproduction of comments is not a stamp of approval from *The Indexer* 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

**ABC-CLIO:** *Encyclopedia of women in the Renaissance: Italy, France, and England*, ed. Diana Robin et al. (2007, 459 pp, \$95). Rev. by Ann Welton, *The Booklist*, **104**(1), 1 September 2007.

The index is comprehensive and accurate.

**Ashgate:** *British librarianship and information work 2001–2005*, ed. J. H. Bowman (2007, 566 pp, £70). Rev. by Richard Turner, *New Library World*, **108**(9/10), 2007.

The whole work is supremely indexed and this eases access further to what could easily have been a turgid reference work, but instead is a vibrant reflection of a diverse profession that is ably meeting a myriad of challenges.

Rev. by Bob Duckett, *Library & Information Update*, **6**(10), October 2007.

A feature of the volume is the impressively detailed index covering 35 double-columned pages. As both a 'state-of-the-art' read and a reference resource, this is a 'must have' for library managers and committed professionals.

**Chicago University Press:** *Deforesting the earth: from prehistory to global crisis – an abridgement* by M. Williams (2006, 520 pp, £16, US\$25). Rev. by Thomas Harvey, *Progress in Human Geography*, **31**(5), October 2007.

There is the grand historical and geographical sweep; there is the elegant prose; there are the wonderful bibliographic essay, footnotes and index; and there are the still numerous tables, plates and figures.

**Chicago University Press:** *A manual for writers of research papers, theses, and dissertations. Chicago style for students and researchers*, by Kate L. Turabian (2007, 436 pp, £10). Rev. by John Taylor, *Editing Matters*, September/October 2007.

A 26-page index (three levels) will help you locate anything in this comprehensive manual.

**Schlütersche:** *Wilhelm Busch: Die Bildergeschichten. Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, i: *Frühwerk*; ii: *Reifezeit*; iii: *Spätwerk*, ed. by Hans Ries and Ingrid Haberland (2002, €199). Rev. by Brian Alderson, *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society*, **8**(1), March 2007.

This is a magnificent achievement whose exhaustive character is

perhaps best exemplified through its sixteen indexes, which not only provide a full guide to the intricacies that crop up in individual articles but also include separate listings for such topics as Busch's use of exclamations, internal rhymes, and zeugmata!

**SPCK:** *Serving the parish*, by Martin Dudley and Virginia Rounding (2006, 160 pp, £10.99). Rev. by Ken Bakewell, *The Reader*, **104**(2), summer 2007.

This is an excellent and well-indexed book.

**Springer:** *Deadly dermatologic diseases: clinicopathologic atlas and text*, by Michael B. Morgan et al. (2007, 188 pp with CD-ROM, £74.50).

Division of the book into major topic areas partly works, but subdivision of topics under these headings by alphabetical sequence splits up logical links (such as granulomatous slack skin and subcutaneous panniculitis-like lymphoma, both of which are unusual variants of T-cell lymphoma). Similarly, hereditary haemorrhagic telangiectasia is classed as an inborn error of metabolism, rather than as a vascular disorder, and amyloid as paraneoplastic, even though most amyloidosis isn't myeloma-related. However, this classification and sequence problem is solved by a clear index.

**Wiley:** *Copyediting & proofreading for dummies*, by Suzanne Gilad (2007, 384 pp, £13.99). Rev. by John Taylor, *Editing Matters*, September/October 2007.

The 16-page index is exemplary – it's comprehensive, structured and sums up the quality of this must-have book.

**World Book:** *The World Book encyclopedia* (22 vols) (2007, \$899). Rev. by Barbara Bibel and Shauna Yusko, *The Booklist*, **104**(2), 15 September 2007.

The index is detailed and easy to use, and the 'Research Guide' found in the index volume is useful for students who need help organizing a project.

## Indexes censured

**Ashgate:** *English socialist periodicals, 1880–1900: a reference source*, by Deborah Mutch (2005, xxxvii + 439 pp, £55). Rev. by Robert Laurie, *The Library*, **8**(1), March 2007.

The only index is that of authors, but the fact that the material is already arranged in such an order means that the index fails to provide any real added value.

**Berkshire:** *Berkshire encyclopedia of extreme sports* by Douglas Booth and Holly Thorpe (2006, 450 pp, £109). Rev. by Sue Polanka, *The Booklist*, **104**(2), 15 September 2007.

Nearly 70 sports experts and athletes wrote content for this encyclopedia, which has a detailed (but not always thorough) index . . .

**Continuum:** *C. Day-Lewis: a life*, by Peter Stanford (2007, 384 pp, £25). Rev. by Neil Powell, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 August 2007.

Peter Stanford's useful book assembles a vast amount of background detail, but is in other respects calamitous . . . the index is haphazard and repetitious . . . even Cheltenham College becomes 'Cheltenham School' in the index. The author's shortcomings are an occasion for sorrow; the publisher's for anger.

**Faber:** *Letters of Ted Hughes*, ed. Christopher Reid (2007, 800 pp, £30). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Spectator*, 17 November 2007.

They're let down by a sketchy index, but the in-text apparatus is excellent.

**Facet Publishing:** *Organizing information: from the shelf to the web*, by G. G. Chowdhury and Sudatta Chowdhury (2007, 230 pp, £34.95). Rev. by J. H. Bowman, *Library & Information Update*, 6(10), October 2005.

Often terms are left unexplained or hanging in the air: e.g. citation order is suddenly mentioned (with no definition or explanation) on page 75, but it is impossible to discover whether it has appeared before because it does not feature in the index at all.

**Greenwood:** *Icons of horror and the supernatural: an encyclopedia of our worst nightmares*, ed. S. T. Joshi (2007, 796 pp, \$175). Rev. by Kathleen Stipek, *The Booklist*, 104(1), 1 September 2007.

A general bibliography and index are contained in volume 2.

The work is weakened by editorial errors. In the chapter 'The Doppelgänger', people 'wreck havoc'. A Gene Wolfe story is described as 'creepy but ghost'. Jerry Ahern and Sharon Ahern's novel *Werewolves* is spelled Werewolvess. Many similar errors should have been corrected. The index is incomplete, missing many items that are mentioned in the text. With a better index and fewer errors, this would have been easy to recommend, but as it is, it is recommended with strong reservations for larger public libraries as a readers' – and viewers' – advisory tool and for academic libraries with popular culture and literature classes.

**Haus:** *London stage in the 20th century*, by Robert Tanitch (2007, 330 pp, £30). Rev. by Lloyd Evans, *The Spectator*, 20 October 2007.

This is a fascinating, imperfect survey listing all the major London openings along with colourful quotes and reviews. The book isn't well organized (the index is full of omissions), so it's not ideal for finding what you're looking for. But it's absolutely wonderful for finding what you're not looking for.

**Johns Hopkins University Press:** *Horns, tusks, and flippers: the evolution of hoofed mammals*, ed. Donald R. Prothero and Robert M. Schoch (2002, 394 pp, \$73). Rev. by Samantha Price, *Aquatic Mammals* 33(2), 2007.

It is, however, unfortunate that the structure of the book makes it difficult to use as a reference work as the index is full of pre-classification popular names. For example, you have to know that the okapi was once referred to as the 'forest donkey' or that brontothere translates to 'thunder beast'.

**Hutchinson:** *The Blair years: extracts from the Alastair Campbell diaries*, by Alastair Campbell (2007, 794 pp, £25). Rev. by Michael White, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 August 2007.

Campbell famously did not do policy (or God), and the book's index does not list a single entry under 'environment' – a significant oversight that could torpedo New Labour's legacy. It is still more surprising – dodgy, even – that 'Iraq' warrants no indexed listing, though it hangs over the back half of the book . . . . The *Sun's*

Trevor Kavanagh has one less index entry than I do, which is misleading.

**Allen Lane:** *The pursuit of glory: Europe 1648–1815*, by Tim Blanning (2007, 707 pp, £30). Rev. by Keith Thomas, *Guardian*, 9 June 2007.

He has written a densely absorbing book, though one that would be improved by a better index.

**McGraw-Hill:** *Principles of cerebro-vascular disease*, by Harold P. Adams, Jr. (2007, 564 pp, \$185). Rev. by John W. Norris, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 16 August 2007.

I found the index to be the weakest part of the book. It lacks cross-referencing, and some sections have only a few entries per heading – a major problem in a book that will be used mostly as a reference.

**Manchester University Press:** *The invention of Spain: cultural relations between Britain and Spain 1770–1870*, by David J. Howarth (2006, 256 pp, £55). Rev. by Martin Beagles, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 October 2007.

Howarth has not been well served by his publisher. Sloppy or absent punctuation is a constant distraction, and the index is eccentric in places. Such carelessness aside, however, this is a fascinating and well-researched study.

**Neal-Schuman:** *Sing a song of storytime*, by Susan Dailey (2007, 199 pp, \$65). Rev. by Sharon Cohen, *The Booklist*, 104(2), 15 September 2007.

Although the index is unreliable, the book is a valuable contribution because it can be used to encourage children to sing rather than just listening to CDs and watching music videos.

**Routledge:** *New makers of modern culture*, ed. Justin Wintle (2 vols, 1856 pp, £225 the set). Rev. by Richard Davenport-Hines, *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 September 2007.

The credibility of modern publishers stands and falls by how much they are willing to spend on a good index. It is indispensable for reference sources in book form to be equipped with indexes compiled with human intelligence and discrimination rather than cheapskate, automated affairs. A printed index needs to be more nuanced and appraising than the instant word-spotting of Search and Find available in online research. But *New makers's* index has some errors and many vagaries. Its entry on the human immunodeficiency virus correctly refers to page 550 (the joint entry on Robert Gallo and Luc Montagnier, the American and French discoverers of the virus, which gently demonstrates the ruthless chauvinism of US reactions to superior French science) and incorrectly to pages 990–92 (which covers the separate entries of Thomas Mann and Karl Mannheim). The index of *New makers* is satisfactory so far as people's names go, but feeble on categories and concepts – a vulnerable point in a dictionary of ideas – and fails to identify similar concepts or activities when they are not mentioned in the text by the same keywords. The three index references to homosexuality take readers to Auden, Foucault and Hockney; but with no hint of the entries on Housman, Whitman, Wilde *et hoc genus omne*. Indeed, several of the entries have a 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' approach to their subjects: Alan Turing 'died of poisoning, possibly accidental', we are told, but it seems ignoble to avoid mentioning the medical and legal persecution that led to his suicide. [*But it is the indexer's job to index what is in the text, not what should be there.*]

**Walker and Company:** *The sphinx on the table: Sigmund Freud's art*

*collection and the development of psychoanalysis*, by Janine Burke (2006, 384 pp, \$27.95). Rev. by Robert Michels, *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164(10), October 2007.

Its intended audience is unclear. It has some of the trappings of scholarship (341 pages of text with 876 end notes), but not others (the index is poor).

**Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins:** *The handbook of critical care drug therapy*, 3rd edn, ed. Gregory M Susla et al. (2006, 368 pp, \$39.95). Rev. by Veena Karir, *Respiratory Care*, 52(11), November 2007.

The index lists drugs in both generic and trade name, as well as disease processes. The index would have been more beneficial had the authors identified the more important pages referenced for a particular therapy, such as in the example of nitroprusside discussed above. [*But did the authors do the index?*]

## Indexes omitted

**Backbeat:** *The folk handbook*, ed. John Morrish (2008, 288 pp, £19.95). Rev. by Charlotte Greig, *Independent on Sunday*, 19 August 2007.

Overall, there is only one minor criticism that I would make: a separate index of song titles, with alternate versions, would have been useful. Many readers will want to go straight to individual songs, rather than look through the selections by theme or consult a general index. But in every other way, this is a very fine, user-friendly collection . . .

**Booksurge:** *IT wars: managing the business-technology weave in the new millennium*, by David Scott (2006, 402 pp, \$26.99). Rev. by Peter Chapman, *Library & Information Update*, 6(9) 2007.

Missing are references, a bibliography and an index but, as it is promoting the author's way of working within an organisation, the lack of these features does not diminish it. [*A non-sequitur, surely? And these are scandalous omissions for a 402-page book.*]

**Ebury Press:** *Have a nice Doomsday: why millions of Americans are looking forward to the end of the world*, by Nicholas Guyatt (2007, 312 pp, £10.99). Rev. by Bernice Martin, *Times Literary Supplement*, 14 September 2007.

There is no index, but a decent bibliography masquerades as 'Further Reading'.

**Faber:** *Touchstones: essays on literature, art and politics*, by Mario Vargas Llosa, selected, transl. and ed. John King (2007, 386 pp, £25). Rev. by Clive Griffin, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 August 2007.

An index and illustrations of the less familiar works of art discussed would have been helpful to readers, while Faber could have served author and translator better by more careful attention to detail. But this is a fascinating book.

**Hamish Hamilton:** *Wildwood: a journey through trees*, by Roger Deakin (2007, 391 pp, £20). Rev. by Oliver Rackham, *The Spectator*, 11 August 2007.

A book like this cries out for pictures and maps: I think of Bewick who might have illustrated Clare. It also needs an index, for many passages are worth finding again and re-reading. (Or maybe an annotated table of contents, in the Victorian manner: 'Lost in the Swamp – Adventure with a Crocodile – Field Surgery – a Native Funeral . . .'). [*Now there's a thought.*]

**KITLV Press:** *Deadly dances in the Bornean rainforest: hunting knowledge of the Penan Benalui*, by Rajindra K. Purl (2006, 408 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Gene Ammarell, *American Anthropologist*, 109(3), September 2007.

On the down side, I found that the book suffers from certain structural problems that better editing could have overcome. Overall, it reads too much like a dissertation with unnecessarily redundant chapter introductions and summaries. More frustrating, however, the fine set of maps and figures included in the text are not listed in the front of the book, nor are page numbers given when maps and figures are mentioned in the text. Likewise, there is no author index, nor are authors mentioned in the general index.

**Oneworld:** *Islam, past, present and future*, by Hans Küng (2007, 800 pp, £29.99). Rev. by Christian W. Troll, *The Tablet*, 19 May 2007.

This volume, which regrettably lacks any glossary and index, constitutes a kind of 'shorter' encyclopaedia of Islam and of Christian/Muslim relations in the past, present and future.

**Pantheon Books:** *A quest for a new foreign policy*, by Anatol Lieven and John Hulsman (2007, 199 pp, \$22). Rev. by Tom Roberts, *National Catholic Reporter*, 43(40), 5 October 2007.

The one maddening negative of the book is that it contains no index.

**Paternoster:** *The potted guide to theology*, by Tony Gray and Steve English (2007, 164 pp, £7.99). Rev. by Nick Mackenzie, *Church of England Newspaper*, 26 October 2007.

The only drawback is the absence of an index.

**Stadia:** *Brian Lara: cricket's troubled genius*, by Brian Scovell (2007, 224 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Stephen Fay, *The Wisden Cricketer*, September 2007.

Like many biographies of this kind, it is repetitive, poorly edited and there is no index.

**TFM Publishing:** *The evidence for vascular surgery*, ed. J. Earnshaw and J. A. Murie (2007, 270 pp, £59.95). Rev. by P. A. Grace, *The Surgeon*, 5(5), 2007.

The only feature the book lacks is an index, but it is relatively easy to find your way around the book nonetheless.

**Timewell Press:** *Shark infested waters*, by Michael Whitehall (2007, 288 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Nicholas Clee, *Guardian*, 8 September 2007.

The actors in this book are, almost without exception, insecure, demanding, and lacking in self-awareness. They will pick up Whitehall's book and head straight for the index – but there isn't one.

**Vintage:** *Things I didn't know*, by Robert Hughes (2007, 416 pp, £10.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 22 September 2007.

Meanwhile, disappointingly, someone at Vintage has decided to charge eleven quid for this book without putting an index in it. A pity, for it deserves one.

## Obiter dicta

**Faber:** *Dawn of the dumb: dispatches from the idiotic frontline*, by Charlie Brooker (2007, 368 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *Guardian*, 27 October 2007.

And hallelujah, it's even got an index. 'Piss, Justin see Timberlake, Justin'; 'Unforgivable subhuman cocksuckers see psychics'.

#### Reviewer recommends index entries

Yours was a front row seat on the drama of Camelot. Indeed when you weren't playing in the stalls, you were playing the lead. Give us the inside scoop. And don't forget to include a detailed index so we can flip to the pages with the juicy bits.

You can guess at the headings now: Chappaquiddick, failed presidential bid, William Kennedy Smith rape case, Skakel murder case, Harvard expulsion and – of course – assassination 1963 and assassination 1968.

David Osborne on Teddy Kennedy's forthcoming memoirs, *Independent*, 1 December 2007.

#### Woolf and the learned pig

Virginia Woolf compiled the index to Viola Tree's *Castles in the air: the story of my singing days*, which the Hogarth Press published in April 1926. We know this because she wrote to Vita Sackville-West on 29 March: 'If you had come in yesterday you would have seen me with the floor all strewn with little squares of paper, like the learned pig, making an index for Viola.' (Stuart N. Clarke, *Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain Newsletter*, Issue no. 26, September 2007)

[The learned pig appeared in Philip Astley's circus and was trained to choose letters from a pile of alphabet cards.]

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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).

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