

# 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

**American Bar Association:** *Garner on language and writing*, by Bryan A. Garner (2008, 876 pp, \$60). Rev. by William Safire, *New York Times*, 26 April 2009.

\$60, but worth it for 800 pages and a thorough index, which is becoming a lost art. [*Though as Joel Berson pointed out on Index-L, 'of course an "index" is not an art, no matter how thorough; the art is "indexing".'*]

**BIS (British Interplanetary Society):** *Interplanetary: a history of the British Interplanetary Society*, ed. by Bob Parkinson (2008, 100 pp, £20). Rev. by Mark Williamson, *Spaceflight*, 51, April 2009.

The book concludes with a useful three-page index.

**Brill:** *Early Islamic legal theory: the Risala of Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi'i*, by Joseph E. Lowry (2007). Rev. by Ahmad El Shamsy, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 128(1), 2008.

The value of Lowry's book as a reference work is further enhanced by the superb indices [*sic*] that allow the reader to search for Arabic roots and Qur'anic verses as well as for English terms, and to locate citations from the Risala according to paragraph numbers in the Shakir edition. One can only hope that such thorough indexing will become standard in our field. [*Indexes by Alex Popovkin.*]

**British Library:** *An annotated international bibliography of Lewis Carroll's Sylvie and Bruno books*, by Byron Sewell and Clare Imholtz (2008, 274 pp, £50). Rev. by Fiona Barnard, *Rare Books Newsletter*, 84, 2008.

The volume includes a useful general index and is attractively produced . . .

**Cambridge University Press:** *The Cambridge history of the book in Britain: vol II, 1100–1400*, ed. by Nigel Morgan and Rodney M. Thomson (2008, xxiv + 615 pp, £95). Rev. by Alun Ford, *Rare Books Newsletter*, 84, 2008.

The volume has a long bibliography of primary and secondary sources and thorough indexes (including an index of manuscript pressmarks and their common names) . . .

**Elsevier Science:** *Soft computing and intelligent data analysis in oil exploration*, ed. by M. Nikravesh (2003, 744 pp, €160). Rev. by Philip H. H. Nelson, *Petroleum Geoscience*, 9(4), 2003.

In addition to the thirty contributions presented as thirty chapters, on subjects ranging from 'Soft computing for intelligent reservoir characterization and modelling' to 'Artificial neural networks linked to GIS', there is a 24-page Subject Index at the back of the book. Here can be found page references to subjects as diverse as 'agglutinated foraminifera' (five page references), 'geostatistical analysis' (six page references) and 'spatial variability' (seventeen references).

**Facet Publishing:** *Libraries without walls 7* (conference proceedings, 14-18 September 2007, CERLIM – Centre for Research in Library and Information Management), ed. by Peter Brophy et al. (2008, 255 pp, £44.95). Rev. by Mike Freeman, *New Library World*, 110(3/4), 2009.

The book has a good, clear Index and is well printed and laid out – I just wish it had a Glossary of all those pesky acronyms, however!

**Fayard:** *Paul Valéry*, by Michel Jarrety (1366 pp, €52). Rev. by Paul Gifford, *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 March 2009.

. . . this doorstopper of a book, over 1,300 pages in length, richly illustrated and with scholarly notes for specialist readers, as well as a serviceable index (helpful to the far greater number who will consult it as a reference book).

**Geological Society of London:** *The Millennium atlas: Petroleum geology of the central and northern North Sea*, ed. by D. Evans et al. (2003, 390 pp, £199.99). Rev. by Joe Cartwright, *Petroleum Geoscience*, 9(2), 2003.

The organization of the Atlas is excellent, and the overall structure of the chapters and their sub-division allows swift access on specific points, or facilitates a more general interrogation aided by a very thorough index and reference list.

**IVP:** *Global dictionary of theology: a resource for the worldwide Church*, ed. by William A. Dyrness and Veli-Matti Kärkäinen (2008, 996 pp, £29.99). Rev. by John Saxbee, *Church Times*, 27 February 2009.

This is a model dictionary in terms of cross-referencing, indexing, and the provision of generally balanced bibliographies – but we are left to ponder the significance of Anglicans' being situated between Angels and Animals. [*Dr Saxbee is the Bishop of Lincoln.*]

**Jacana:** *Cronin's key guide: Australian reptiles and frogs*, by Leonard Cronin (2009, 232 pp, \$35). Rev. by Lucy Sussex, *The Sunday Age* (Melbourne), 1 March 2009.

An illustrated index, including small maps, is a useful finding guide.

**Royal Society of Chemistry:** *Kitchen chemistry*, by Ted Lister and Heston Blumenthal (2005, 125 pp, £19.50). Rev. by Tim Harrison, *Science in school*, 6 December 2007.

If selected carefully, food chemistry experiments can be conducted by students from primary to pre-university level. Indeed, a helpful

index categorises the *Kitchen Chemistry* activities by age: 5–11, 11–16 and post-16 (pre-university).

**St Martin's Press:** *Hiding man: a biography of Donald Barthelme*, by Tracy Daugherty (2009, 581 pp, \$35). Rev. by Lorrie Moore, *New York Review of Books*, 14 March 2009.

The index is admirable in the hypnotic way of indexes.

**Ulysses Press:** *Patriots: a novel of survival*, by James Wesley, Rawles [comma sic] (2009, 384 pp, £9.10). Rev. by Kate Muir, *The Times*, 2 May 2009.

Unusually for a novel, it has an impressively detailed index that goes from 'ambushes, ammunition, anti-personnel mines' and 'antivehicular trenches' to 'ball-peen hammer as weapon, bartering, bicycle generators, blood transfusions, bullet-resistant vests', and the inexplicable 'butter-knife guns'.

**University of Chicago Press:** *The ecology and conservation of Asian hornbills: farmers of the forest*, by Margaret F. Kinnaird and Timothy G. O'Brien (2008, 352 pp, \$45). Rev. by R. W. Ashford, *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 March 2009.

The entire work is meticulously referenced and indexed. [Index by ASI member Sharon Hughes.]

## Two cheers!

**Springer-Verlag:** *Mud and mudstones*, by P. E. Potter and P. J. Depretis (2005, 297 pp, £61.50). Rev. by George Leckie, *Petroleum Geoscience*, 11(3), 2005.

The text is easy reading, even for a non-specialist, and the authors provide numerous examples – so many in fact that the subject index can sometimes be found wanting. For example I was thinking that the book seemed too New World oriented since the index contained no reference to the North Sea's major source rock. However when I came to read the section on black shales, there it was.

## Indexes censured

**Allen Lane:** *Mother of God: a history of the Virgin Mary*, by Miri Rubin (2009, 533 pp, £30). Rev. by Lucy Beckett, *Times Literary Supplement*, 8 May 2009.

There are eighty formidable pages of references and notes, and an unhelpfully incomplete index.

**Ashgate:** *Their hands before our eyes: a closer look at scribes* (2008, 188pp, £65). Rev. by Linne R. Mooney, *Times Literary Supplement*, 17 April 2009.

The indices [sic] might have been more comprehensive, especially the General Index, which should have included the many place names mentioned.

**British Library:** *Book trade connections from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries*, ed. by John Hinks and Catherine Armstrong (2008, xiii + 265 pp, £25). Rev. by Jane Wickenden, *Rare Books Newsletter*, 84, 2008.

The index could perhaps have been fuller; lack of an entry for *Aristotle's Masterpiece* ('which, incidentally, is neither', p. 13) meant flicking through the book again.

**Fourth Estate:** *So I have thought of you: the letters of Penelope Fitzgerald*, ed. by Terence Dooley (2008, 624 pp, \$59.99). Rev. by Brian McFarlane, *The Age*, 7 February 2009.

... the index is utterly inadequate and there are too few footnotes identifying people referred to in the letters.

[See also reviews in *Indexes reviewed*, December 2008 issue.]

**Routledge:** *Catholicism in modern Italy*, by John Pollard (2008, 247 pp, £70). Rev. by Peter Marshall, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 May 2009.

It is unfortunate ... that the book is marred by careless copy-editing, an unreliable index, and a number of (mostly venial) authorial lapses.

**Yale University Press:** *Florence 1900: the quest for Arcadia*, by Bernd Roeck, tr. by Stewart Spencer (2009, 317 pp, £25). Rev. by Jonathan Keates, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 June 2009.

Only the index of this book dissatisfies, a mean little affair of listed page numbers where a fully thematic apparatus is vital.

## Indexes omitted

**Allen & Unwin:** *The killing of Caroline Byrne: a journey for justice*, by Robert Wainwright (2009, 362 pp, \$24.99).

*Lady killer: how conman Bruce Burrell kidnapped and killed rich women for their money*, by Candace Sutton and Ellen Connolly (228 pp, \$24.99).

These four books share a number of characteristics, some of which at first glance may seem relatively unimportant ... Significantly, none of them has an index, which makes it difficult for the litigious and self-important to look themselves up. [The other two books reviewed are: **Text Publishing:** *No angel: my undercover journey to the dark heart of the Hells Angels*, by Jay Dobyns (2009, 320 pp, \$34.95), and **Viking:** *Criminals in grass castles: the true story of Trimbole, Mr Asia and the disappearance of Donald Mackay*, by Keith Moor (1990, 346 pp, \$32.95).]

**Fitzwilliam Museum:** *I turned it into a palace: Sydney Cockerell and the Fitzwilliam Museum*, by Stella Panayotova (2008, 217 pp, £24.95). Rev. by Lindsay Duguid, *Times Literary Supplement*, 10 April 2009.

The book is generously illustrated, but the text is scattered with typos, rogue hyphens and misspellings and it has no index.

**Giramondo:** *House of exile: the life and times of Heinrich Mann and Nelly Kroeger-Mann*, by Evelyn Juers (2008, 384 pp, \$32.95). Rev. by Michael Hofmann, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 April 2009.

... no index, no chronology, no photographs or illustrations ...

**Gulf Petrolink:** *The desert of Southeast Arabia*, by Kenneth W. Glennie (2005, 215 pp, \$175). Rev. by John Parker, *Petroleum Geoscience*, 12(2), 2006.

The book concludes with an extensive reference list, a glossary, but lacks an index.

**Interpet Publishing:** *Living with a house rabbit*, by Linda Dykes and Helen Flack (2003, 128 pp, £12.99). Rev. by 'A Customer', www.amazon.co.uk, 17 May 2009.

I was surprised to find the book didn't have an index, although the information is in clear chapter sections so it's fairly easy to find what you're looking for, even if you're just browsing.

**Oxford University Press:** *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography 2001-2004*, ed. by Lawrence Goldman (2009, 1268 pp, £95). Rev. by Jeremy Paxman, *The Guardian*, 2 May 2009.

It is a mark of its idiosyncrasy that while the book contains an index of contributors, it has neither index nor table of contents to list those whose lives are chronicled.

**Regent College Publishing:** *Sacred history and sacred geography: spiritual journeys in time and space* (2008, 327 pp, £12.95). Rev. by Lucy Beckett, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 March 2009.

Both books would be better without a few jokes that thud in cold print, both have a few glaring misprints, and neither has an index.

**Yale University Press:** *A world of letters: Yale University Press 1908-2008*, by Nicholas A. Basbanes (2008, 240 pp, £16). Rev. by James Fergusson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 29 May 2009.

Yale University Press at 100 publishes some 400 books a year and, impressively, is one of the few university presses anywhere that ever makes money. What a pity no one put some of it towards giving Basbanes an index.

## Obiter dicta

**Continuum:** *The broken compass: how British politics lost its way*, by Peter Hitchens (220 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Peter Wilby, *The Observer*, 24 May 2009.

If you are short of time, rather than reading this book, you can just flick through the index. There you will find, among much else: Afghanistan, very long way from North Atlantic; baby farms, officially known as 'day nurseries'; Blair, Anthony, not missed on departure; Cameron, David, exaggerated praise for; Conservative party, does not love Britain; Labour party, does not love the poor. The index does not include 'bonkers, author sometimes called', but that must be an oversight . . . At book length, the lack of depth shows up. The entry in my index reads: 'Hitchens, P., too much ranting, not enough thinking.'

Rev. by Steven Poole, *The Guardian*, 30 May 2009.

Hitchens should at least be applauded for taking the trouble to provide an amusing index, a duty shirked by too many authors.

[See also Peter Hitchens: the index, *below*.]

**Oxford University Press:** *The new Oxford companion to law*, ed. by Peter Cane and Joanne Conaghan (2008, 1306 pp, £39.95). Rev. by Julian Bates, *Editing Matters*, March/April 2009.

Even in a work of this length there are bound to be some omissions. In an attempt to check whether this title hits the spot when it comes to its non-lawyer target market, I put myself in the position of a journalist seeking clarification on the law relating to drinking and driving. I looked up 'alcohol'. Nothing there. 'Drink driving': no entry. Searches for 'Road Traffic Act', 'motoring offences' and 'breathalyser' were all equally fruitless. Only later, when I realized that there is a subject index after the main index (on p. 1285), was I able to establish that there is nothing on motoring law anywhere in the book.

**Word Power Books:** *Scarcely ever out of my thoughts: the letters of Valda Trevlyn Grieve to Christopher Murray Grieve* (Hugh MacDiarmid), ed. by Beth Junor (2007, 278 pp, £20). Rev. by Moira Burgess, *Scottish Studies Review*, 19(2), Autumn 2008.

. . . the index . . . would bring tears to the eyes of a professional indexer, whether of laughter or pain. It's difficult to convey the whole flavour in extracts, but 'Thirtieth birthday, Valda's' is a particularly vintage entry, and I am also rather fond of 'Knitting', lovingly subdivided into 'gloves . . . knickers . . . socks . . . vests . . .'

## Index vetoed by Vermont

A yellowed paper is the first bill vetoed by a Vermont governor that lawmakers stood up for and let stand.

The year was 1845 and the issue was whether to pay a publisher \$60 for compiling an index of state statutes.

Governor William Slade thought the job was poorly done, so the man should not be paid. But the lawmakers said he deserved his money so voted to override the veto.

Vermont state archivist Gregory Sanford has studied the history of vetoes.

'It is a fascinating dialogue among ourselves; who we are as Vermonters, and who we are as citizens,' he said.

Sanford says early vetoes were often made because of a governor's perception that a bill contained technical errors but now the veto is more a policy tool. There have only been six veto overrides in state history, the last coming nearly 20 years ago when Governor Madeleine Kunin feared the state budget would run a deep deficit. Lawmakers sent a clear message they thought she was wrong.

Jack Thurston, WCAX News, WCAX.com, 7 April 2009

## Indexing by seasons

Cook Book Companions is a superb idea from food enthusiast Nick Gitsam's popular blog/labour of love/hobby, Eat the Seasons. A series of electronic books that cost just £1.50 each to download and print out, the companions work alongside the most popular cookbooks of recent years – you are bound to have several on your shelves. All the recipes in each book, from Nigella's *How to Eat* to Nigel Slater's *The Kitchen Diaries*, have been indexed and sorted into spring, summer, autumn and winter, according to the seasonality of their main ingredients. Don't you wish you had thought of that? [www.eattheseasons.co.uk/cookbookcompanions.htm](http://www.eattheseasons.co.uk/cookbookcompanions.htm).

'Titbits & Crumbs', *Scoff!* magazine, Spring 2009

## No injunction against index

MI5 and MI6 have conceded they cannot stop the publication of a book on Britain's security and intelligence agencies even though it is said to contain the names of officers who have not previously been identified.

The courts would not grant an injunction, officials said yesterday, because the book, *Secret Wars – One Hundred Years of British Intelligence Inside MI5 and MI6*, by Gordon Thomas, has already been published, and is widely available, in the US.

The first handful of pages, and the entire index, can be read on the internet, placed there by book-buying sites. . . . Thomas's book was published in the US two months ago and is due to be published in the UK on 4 May. The index does not immediately appear to betray any sensitive British source. Where some of the officers are known, the information about them is not always up to date. Whitehall officials conceded yesterday that the publication of *Secret Wars* had not caused any officer to be recalled from an operational post.

(Richard Norton-Taylor and Chris McGreal, 'MI5 and MI6 unable to stop *Secret Wars* publication', *The Guardian*, 15 April 2009)

### Enquire within

The range of its recommendations is illustrated by the index, which the author – nameless, though often assertive, even treating us to homely anecdotes about his wife and his friends – describes as 'the knocker, with which the door of knowledge may be opened'. This begins with Ablutions, Frequent, Salutary Effects of, and ends with seven entries dedicated to zinc.

David McKie on *Enquire within upon everything* (1891 edn), 'Zinc, leaves and toads', *The Guardian*, 27 April 2009

[*Gale Carruthers commented in a letter on 28 April*: My 1860 edition (bought about 30 years ago for 10p and no missing pages) starts the index with 'About or With' (when to use which), and then rushes straight on to 'Accidents in Carriages'. And I have only five entries for zinc ... The unstoppable march of progress, I suppose.]

### Indexes? Just gimme the facts

It must be common knowledge by now that Alan Titchmarsh is to take over from John Humphrys on the BBC Radio 4 *Today* programme when he retires in June? No. But, still, Titchmarsh is everywhere and now, through the BBC, he has published a series of small paperback guides to various aspects of gardening. He's not alone. A similar series, the *Greenfingers Guides*, has arrived from the publisher Headline, the Royal Horticultural Society and Dorling Kindersley have their *Simple Steps* series, and the BBC has a *101 Ideas* series in association with *BBC Gardeners' World*. The guide business is clearly booming.

But here's the interesting bit: apart from the pocket-sized *Gardeners' World* series, all the rest bear a curious, some might say desperate, resemblance to that famous series, the *Expert* books, by Dr David Hessayon. Even the spine of the Titchmarsh series looks the same as *Experts*. . . . There's no denying that the much-imitated regular format is brilliant. Easy in the hand, an undaunting slimness, and each book dealing with only one subject — roses, climbers, pests — so that you can pretty well see from riffling through the pages where to find the information you want; no wading through long indexes. Just the simple truth. Well, simplish. At about £7 a copy, each series is good value, and there's the feeling that you can always buy another if you need it.

Stephen Anderton, 'Guiding lights in the garden', *The Times*, 18 April 2009.

### Garrick unindexed

The two quarto volumes of [David Garrick's] correspondence, published by James Boaden in 1831–2, are of great value and interest, consisting of letters from many distinguished persons, and his answers to them. . . . Boaden, however, arranged the letters carelessly, without putting his materials in a satisfactory chronological order or providing a much-needed index. . . .

(Henry B. Wheatley, 'Letter writers', *Cambridge history of English literature*, vol. x)

### Edible indexes

The *Morgontörn's* editorial departments were situated in Gamla Stan, the Old Town, around the corner from the Stock Exchange and the Academy, in a neighborhood cleverly rehabilitated for picturesqueness. But the last carpenter to attend to the *Morgontörn's* forlorn and rickety quarters had lifted his hammer almost eighty years ago; consequently the *Morgontörn* was picturesque only from the street. [. . .] Gray, narrow, and tall, it had six wretched storeys. The cultural section claimed the topmost floor, where a well-disciplined regiment of mice held their command post. There were heaps of books on every surface. The mice made an orderly meal of them, prefaces for appetizers and indexes for dessert.

Cynthia Ozick, *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987)

### Peter Hitchens: the index

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(excerpts from 'Peter Hitchens: the index', 'as told to Craig Brown', *Private Eye*, no. 1236, 15–28 May 2009)

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