

Indexes reviewed

Edited by Christine Shuttleworth

These extracts from reviews do not pretend to represent a complete survey of all reviews in journals and newspapers. We offer only a selection from quotations that readers have sent in. Our reproduction of comments is not a stamp of approval from The 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

Ambit (literary magazine), *Ambit* 200 (2010, 223pp, £10). Rev. by Gerald Mangan, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 November 2010.

The very latest issue is *Ambit* 201, a useful thirty-page index of contributors to the past fifty numbers. Having just been deprived of its Arts Council subsidy, it clearly stands in urgent need of subscriptions to face its next half-century.

Jonathan Cape: *Shades of Greene: one generation of an English family*, by Jeremy Lewis (580 pp, £25). Rev. by John Sutherland, *Financial Times*, 27 August 2010.

In the early pages of *Shades of Greene*, one rather struggles to recall what was said three chapters ago about 'Tooter' or 'Eppy' (the family loved its nicknames). Rarely has an index – here, the work of Douglas Matthews, our greatest living indexer – been more useful.

Constable: *The last white rose: dynasty, rebellion and treason*, by Desmond Seward (2010, 366 pp, £20). Rev. by Sue Gaisford, *The Tablet*, 23 October 2010.

Because many of the major players have several names, this history can be confusing: the Duke of Buckingham, for example, was also known as Edward Stafford, though he preferred the surname Bohun. He was connected to the Pole family, along with Lord Montague and the famous Cardinal Reginald Pole. Then there were the de la Poles, who boasted Dukes of York, Suffolk, Clarence and Burgundy, and Earls of Devon and Lincoln – not to mention at least three crowned kings. But Seward is a reliable, thorough and scholarly guide. To help sort out the various White Roses, he provides a thorough index, a useful chronology and invaluable family trees.

Cork University Press: *Going to the well for water: the Séamus Ennis field diary 1942–1946*, ed. by Ríonach ú Ógáin (2009, 311 pp, €49). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, May 2010.

Another bonus of the book is the finely detailed index of a rich cast . . . [*Index by SI (Irish Group) member Helen Litton.*]

Cornell University Press: *Muslims and matriarchs: cultural resilience in Indonesia through Jihad and colonialism*, by Jeffrey Hadler (2008, 211 pp, \$39.95). Rev. by Sylvia Chant, *Asian Affairs*, July 2010.

In this impeccably referenced text, there is a concise glossary of the most frequently-used non-English terms, and the index is very comprehensive, suggesting that it may have been compiled by the author himself.

Four Courts Press: *Travellers' accounts as source-materials for Irish historians*, by C. J. Woods (2009, 249 pp, €24.95). Rev. by Sylvie Kleinman, *History Ireland*, May/June 2010.

An index of travellers and places is also provided, allowing for ample cross-referencing.

Fourth Estate: *The lost diaries*, by Craig Brown (2010, 400 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Roland White, *Sunday Times*, 28 November 2010.

If nothing else, *The Lost Diaries* surely has the funniest index of any title currently in circulation. Judge for yourself – Disraeli, Benjamin: proposes to Barbara Cartland; Winner, Michael: bottom wiped 111–112; consumes slice of waiter's buttock with double cream 321; Woolf, Virginia: arm-wrestles Hemingway 10–11; hits Lady Colefax with frying pan. [*See also the author's comment on his own index under Obiter dicta, below.*]

HKB Press and Oak Knoll Press: *From flock beds to professionalism: a history of indexers*, by Hazel K. Bell (2009, 333 pp, £49). Rev. by William Baker, *Year's Work in English Studies* (89, 2010).

This important book concludes with a listing of references (pp. 311–16), acknowledgements (pp. 317–19) and of course an extensive index (pp. 321–33), which should provide a model to us all. [*See an extract from another review under Three cheers, below.*]

Irish Manuscripts Commission: *World War I and the question of Ulster: the correspondence of Lilian and Wilfrid Spender*, ed. by Margaret Baguley (2009, 536 pp, €55). Rev. in *History Ireland*, January/February 2010.

This has the full academic Monty of a comprehensive index, appendices and footnotes.

Allen Lane: *State of emergency: the way we were: Britain 1970–1974*, by Dominic Sandbrook (2010, 768 pp, £30). Rev. by Hugh Muir, *The Guardian*, 13 October 2010.

Memories, memories. Loads in Dominic Sandbrook's new history *State of Emergency: The Way We Were – Britain 1970-1974*, which stands out not just for the elegance of its prose, but also for the mischief contained in the index entries. Among those for 'Heath, Edward' are: 'disappointed by Himmler's handshake'; 'massacres French language'; 'massacres Mozart'. Meanwhile, for Heath's adversary, 'Wilson, Harold', there are: 'views on cheese'; 'plans to sail up the Clyde in lighthouse-keeper's uniform'; and 'wades in shit for three months'. Elsewhere, one of the entries for the Labour heavyweight Denis Healey reads: 'tucks Barbara Castle under armpit'. Not many people did that to Barbara. Nobody did it twice.

Library of America: *Prejudices: the complete series*, by H. L. Mencken, ed. by Marion Rodgers (2010, 1,408 pp, \$70). Rev. by Michael Dirda, *Times Literary Supplement*, 26 November 2010.

One keen benefit of this Library of America edition of *Prejudices* lies in its detailed index, identifying many of the now forgotten fads and personages. Marion Rodgers also corrects the original Knopf edition's myriad typos.

Brian Nugent (author): *An Creideamh: a chronological anthology of traditional Catholic writing* (2009, 732 pp, €28). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, May 2010.

Sources are cited, and the excellent index makes this a book not only for rewarding browsing, but also for reference.

Oxford University Press: *Epistles of the Brethren of Purity: the case of the animals versus man before the King of the Jinn*, ed. and tr. by Lenn E. Goodman and Richard McGregor (2010, 328 pp, £75). Rev. by Geert Jan van Gelder, *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 November 2010.

There are indexes of names and of quotations from the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Bible, Rabbinical texts and 'classical' authors. For some the index rerum will be most useful, with its range from Active Intellect to Zodiac and from ape to worm (zebras being unknown to the authors).

Oxford University Press: *Drugs and public health: Australian perspectives on policy and practice*, ed. by David Moore and Paul Dietze (242 pp, \$69.95). Rev. by Alex Wodak, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 34(1), 2010.

The references are up to date and the book is well indexed.

Penguin: *The Andy Warhol diaries*, ed. by Pat Hackett (2010, 1,216 pp, £20). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *The Guardian*, 27 November 2010.

This is the kind of book that had two launch parties: one for the text, the other for the (unauthorised) publication of the index, which almost tells you everything you need to know about what kind of book it is.

University of Chicago Press: *The Chicago manual of style* (16th edn, 2010, 1,027 pp, £42). Rev. by Catharine Morris, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 November 2010.

CMS is marked by unfaltering good sense; and a good index and numbered paragraphs make it easily navigable.

Verso: *The Verso book of dissent: from Spartacus to the shoe-thrower of Baghdad*, ed. by Andrew Hsiao and Audrea Lim (2010, 384 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *The Guardian*, 30 October 2010.

This is a delightful anthology to dip into if you are or have ever been disgruntled with the status quo. You get one entry per dissenter (there are two indexes: one by alphabetical order, and one breaking this down into geographical regions, which is helpful and reminds us of the book's worldwide reach) . . .

Two cheers!

AMS Press: *Clarissa: the eighteenth-century response, 1747–1804*, ed. by Lois E. Bueler (2 vols, 2009, 977 pp, \$520). Rev. by H. J. Jackson, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 November 2010.

Since the collection is intended as a bare-bones scholarly resource, the lightly modernized texts are practically unannotated, but the authors of all entries are identified in headnotes and may be tracked with the aid of a skeletal index.

HKB Press and Oak Knoll Press: *From flock beds to professionalism: a history of indexers*, by Hazel K. Bell (2009, 333 pp, £49).

Rev. by Jochen Fassbender, *Information Wissenschaft & Praxis*, July/August 2010.

The index was prepared by the author herself and is of high quality and scope. Illustrations, publications and quotations are particularly noted. Subheadings are in chronological and/or systematic order, as required. There are only isolated cases of missing main headings (for example 'software' is found only as a subheading of 'computers'). In any case, similar indexes are not to be found in many German-language specialist books.

Indexes censured

Ashgate: *The history of the book in the west: 1914–2000, vol. V*, by Alexis Weedon (2010, 434 pp, £70). Rev. by Jack Meadows, *Library and Information Update*, December 2010.

What we have here is a collection of articles, or chapters taken from books, on the history of publishing. They provide a sequence of vignettes, rather than a systematic history of the topic. Each is reproduced in its original format, giving the book a somewhat variegated appearance. A more important consequence is that there is no general index, only an index of names.

Canterbury: *Lift high the cross*, by John Gunstone (2010, 364 pp, £25). Rev. by Paul Richardson, *Church of England Newspaper*, 12 November 2010.

Unfortunately the book is marred by numerous errors, many of which could have been removed by careful editing. Bishop Hall of Vermont becomes Bishop Bell, the Sheldonian Theatre becomes the Sheridan . . . [E. C.] Hoskyns is among those omitted from the index though he figures a good deal in the text.

Four Courts Press: *The Irish Franciscans, 1534–1990*, ed. by Edel Bhreathnach, Joseph MacMahon and John McCafferty (2010, 432 pp, £24.95). Rev. by Geraldine Parsons, *The Tablet*, 19 June 2010.

Despite some typographical errors and inconsistencies, notably in the index, this is a handsomely and attractively produced volume.

Lonely Planet: *Germany* (Kindle version, \$15.39). Rev. by Anick Jesdanun, *USA Today*, 28 November 2010.

Another example of poor conversion from paper to bits: There's an index at the end of the Kindle book that serves no purpose. The listings aren't clickable. I would have expected the digital index to function like a search – click on it for all the references to those keywords throughout the book.

Oxford University Press: *The Oxford critical and cultural history of Modernist magazines, vol. 1, Britain and Ireland 1880–1955*, ed. by Peter Brooker and Andrew Thacker (2009, 700 pp, £95). Rev. by Stephen Barkway, *Bulletin of the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain*, 35, September 2010.

The book has an impressive thirty pages of bibliography, but if I have one reservation I would say the index cannot be relied upon. I back up this statement with only one item of evidence, however: I could not find 'Lytton Strachey' in the index, but during my reading found him mentioned on pages 371, 431–2, 434–5, 449 and 671.

Polygon: *Scott-Land: the man who invented a nation*, by Stuart Kelly (2010, 328 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Allan Massie, *The Spectator*, 28 August 2010.

[The author] became addicted to Scott, even while accepting that he will never regain the popularity which, as late as the 1920s, had Virginia Woolf, who has mysteriously slipped out of his book's index, claiming that 'Scott was the last novelist to have Shakespeare's gift of revealing character purely through dialogue' – which gift he indeed possessed, even if not the last to have had it.

Routledge: *The Byzantine world*, ed. by Paul Stephenson (2010, xxxi + 606 pp, \$250). Rev. by Glenn Peers, *The Medieval Review* [n.d.]

The range of essays, therefore, is great, and titling will guide some readers, but not all. In those cases, searching and indexing are key. The index is twenty-five pages long but weak in subentries. Sometimes the entries are counterintuitive, so that churches are listed first by name and then city or place; and the authors in the volume are also indexed, because the editor mentions them in his introductions to the four sections. The weakness of an index is perfectly understandable nowadays, if still highly regrettable. The alphabetization of the *Oxford Dictionary* is a nearly absolute control, and here in *The Byzantine World* we need that control at the back of the book, too. The former is also available online, and even though the index to *A Companion to Byzantium* is weaker than *The Byzantine World*, it exists in an electronic version, too. Not only can one determine quickly if an issue or figure is treated, one can also make easy postings of essays for students to access. No such mechanisms exist for *The Byzantine World*.

Sweet & Maxwell: *International commercial arbitration and conciliation in UNCITRAL Model Law jurisdictions*, by Peter Binder (3rd edn, 2010, 776 pp, £225). Rev. by John Dorter, *Building and Construction Law* 26(4), August 2010.

Technically, the publication is very generous. . . . Unfortunately, the index, although conceded to be based on the publisher's taxonomy, will probably disappoint many. Not only those from common law jurisdiction but others would appreciate being able readily to find such important items as 'bias', 'impartiality', 'independence'. [Glenda Browne, who sent this item, assumes that the reviewer is referring to the Sweet & Maxwell taxonomy discussed by Mark Scott in 'Indexing the law: a controlled vocabulary', *The Indexer* 24(3), April 2005.]

Verso: *A short history of 'Cahiers du cinéma'*, by Emilie Bickerton (2009, 156 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Jonathan Romney, *Times Literary Supplement*, 9 September 2010.

Bickerton's encapsulation of a six-decade history of disputes and contradictions is compelling, but her book is carelessly edited: Pakradouni appears as 'Pakroudini', the critic Louis Marcorelles as 'Marcolles', and the index is uneven.

Viking: *Letters*, by Saul Bellow, ed. by Benjamin Taylor (2010, 608 pp, £30). Rev. by David Sexton, *Evening Standard*, 18 November 2010.

This volume is under-edited too, offering no guide to the corresponding events and too few notes and illustrations, so that you need to read it with James Atlas's biography to hand. Even the index is scant, for example missing out on Bellow's fascinating comments about Vladimir Nabokov (he thought that the situation of a Russian in exile 'can't approach that of a Jew with its special complications and singular horrors').

Yale University Press: *The book in the Renaissance*, by Andrew Pettegree (2010, 440 pp, £30). Rev. by Martin Davies, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 October 2010.

Henricus Stephanus (Etienne), the leading printer of his day, and by some estimates absolutely the leading scholar, makes it into the index but without a page number, and I cannot find where or whether he is discussed.

Indexes omitted

Atlantic Monthly Press: *The great divorce*, by Ilyon Woo (2010, 416 pp, £15.76). Rev. by Mary Beth Norton, *New York Times*, 19 September 2010.

The Great Divorce is inadequately annotated for a work of history. The sketchy endnotes are difficult to relate to the book's text, and sometimes fail to indicate clearly the page of the document to which they refer. What's more, Woo provides neither index nor formal bibliography. To anyone hoping to track her sources, she says, in effect: trust me. That will do for some readers, but surely not for all.

Astron Media: *Security without nuclear deterrence*, by Robert Green (272 pp, £17.99). Rev. by Brian Wicker, *The Tablet*, 28 August 2010.

It's a pity a book of this complexity does not have an index.

AuthorHouse: *Preacher rehab: restoring faith in the sermon*, by Ron Cassidy (2009, 392 pp, £14.99).

Westminster John Knox: *Teaching preaching as a Christian practice: a new approach to homiletic pedagogy*, by Thomas G. Long and Leonora Tubbs Tisdale (2008, 240 pp, £19.99). Rev. by Nick Mercer, *Church Times*, 17 September 2010.

Neither book has an index, which is unhelpful.

Canterbury Press: *John Henry Newman and the path to sainthood*, by Julien Chilcott-Monk (2010, 116 pp, £9.99). Rev. by GP, *Church Times*, 17 September 2010.

There are useful suggestions for further reading; an index would have been a bonus. [*Only a bonus?*]

CFZ Press: *The mystery animals of the British Isles: Northumberland and Teesside*, by Mike J. Hallowell (2008, 245 pp, £9.95); *Kent*, by Neil Arnold (2009, 597 pp, £14.99); *The Western Isles*, by Glen Vaudrey (2009, 154 pp, £12.50). Rev. by Karl Shuker, *Fortean Times*, September 2010.

Each book also has a concise bibliography, although a major criticism of the Hallowell and Arnold volumes is that neither has an index. This is an inexplicable oversight, especially given how useful it would have been in substantial books that cover unfamiliar subjects in a good deal of detail. [*The index to The Western Isles is by SI member Margaret Vaudrey, mother of the author, who insisted that his book should have an index!*]

Hamish Hamilton: *Bomber country: the lost airmen of World War Two*, by Daniel Swift (2010, 304 pp, £20). Rev. by Trevor Royle, *Sunday Herald*, 5 September 2010.

One final point has to be made: while the book's production qualities are seamless, it is disgraceful that the publishers have not supplied an index.

History Press: *Exploring Ireland's historic towns*, by Pat Dargan (2010, 128 pp, €16.99). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, Summer 2010.

It is illustrated with many diagrams and photographs. However there is no index and the contents list is of bare chapters, so reference to places is impossible.

JR Books: *In spite of myself*, by Christopher Plummer (2010, 648 pp, £20). Rev. by James Walton, *Daily Mail*, 12 November 2010.

Plummer tells us far more about his houses and dogs than most readers will need. Even so, the only really damaging flaw – the unforgivable lack of an index – isn't his fault at all.

Rev. by Philip Ziegler, *The Spectator*, 20 November 2010.

The production is calamitous: some of the illustrations are blurred to the point of mystery; unforgivably, there is no index; if an editor has been anywhere near the text there is no evidence of his existence. Trivial inaccuracies abound. [*These unforgiving critics!*]

Limerick Writers' Centre: *Kemmy's Limerick miscellany*, by Denis O'Shaughnessy (2009, 412 pp, £18). Rev. in *History Ireland*, March/April 2010.

This is the perfect book for dipping in and out of, a task that would have been greatly facilitated by the addition of an index.

O Books: *No faith in religion*, by John Saxbee (2009, 224 pp, £11.99). Rev. by Brian Gardner, *The Reader*, 107(3), Autumn 2010.

I could wish there was an index . . .

Oxford University Press: *Faith and power: religion and politics in the Middle East*, by Bernard Lewis (2010, 208 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Brian Wicker, *The Tablet*, 2 October 2010.

This book is an excellent introduction to Islam for Western readers. Because it has so much to offer, it is a great pity that there is no index to access its riches.

Penguin Books: *The Penguin jazz guide*, by Brian Morton and Richard Cook (2010, 768 pp, £20). Rev. by Alison Kerr, *The Herald*, 30 October 2010.

Not only is there a great deal of information to digest, but finding it – if you're looking for fast access to a particular fact or album – can be time-consuming, as entries are presented in chronological order, by the date of recording, rather than alphabetical, under the name of the headlining musician. This means that although the earliest recommended recording of, say, Duke Ellington features in the 1920s section, his work in the subsequent decades is necessarily scattered through the rest of the book. Once you've found one entry on the person you're looking for, you will find cross-references, but a big drawback to this book is the lack of an index which would enable quick hits to be feasible. You have to know which decade to look in for that initial entry.

Penguin Books: *Why is Q always followed by U?*, by Michael Quinion (2010, 368 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Richard Dixon, *The Times*, 13 November 2010.

Nitpickery forces me to lament the lack of a detailed contents page and an index in an otherwise excellent pot pourri. But to give some indication of the author's breadth of subjects, I am not sure if this is the elephant in the room or whether such additional labours would have been just so much faffing around.

Reportage Press: *Saving Darfur: everyone's favourite African war*, by

Rob Crilly (2010, 256 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Ed O'Loughlin, *Irish Times*, 3 April 2010.

There really ought to be an index.

Suhrkamp: *Walter Benjamin: Lumpensammler, Engel und bucklicht Männlein – Ästhetik und Politik bei Walter Benjamin*, by Jean-Michel Palmier, tr. from the French by Horst Brühmann (2009, 1,372 pp, €64). Rev. by Nicholas Jacobs, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 October 2010.

Palmier has written nothing short of an encyclopedic work from which every reader of Benjamin who could read French or German will greatly benefit. It is a pity that it remained unfinished owing to its author's early death. It is also regrettable that a great publisher like Suhrkamp is unable to give such an important book a proper index. A translation into English would be a luxury rather than a necessity.

Two Ravens Press: *To the islands*, by Steven Mithen (2010, 418 pp, £15.99). Rev. by Mike Pitts, *British Archaeology*, November/December 2010.

This is an honest account that pulls no punches (Mithen's Cambridge tutor should be thankful for the lack of an index) . . .

University of Birmingham: *The big society*, by Jesse Norman (2010, 156 pp, £10). Rev. by Amol Rajan, *Independent on Sunday*, 21 November 2010.

The lack of index is annoying, too; I hope there is a second edition which includes one . . .

Viking: *The global forest*, by Diana Beresford-Kroeger (2010, 175 pp, £16.36). Rev. by Rorke Bryan, *Literary Review of Canada*, 18(7), September 2010.

The author does not specifically identify the audience for which the book is intended, but if this is a general audience, then a glossary of technical terms should have been included. Finally, as a reviewer, I would have also welcomed an index.

Obiter dicta

Faber & Faber: *The museum of innocence*, by Orhan Pamuk, tr. by Maureen Freely (2010, 752 pp, £7.99).

'And at the end, let's put an index of names, Orhan Bey. It is thanks to your account that I remembered how many people witnessed our story or were otherwise acquainted with it. Even I have a hard time keeping all the names straight.' [*In this novel by a Turkish Nobel Prize-winning novelist, the first-person narrator speaks to the author in postmodern fashion (on page 714). The 'index of characters' is five and a half pages long: all proper names and locators, no subentries, no jokes.*]

Fourth Estate: *The lost diaries*, by Craig Brown (2010, 400 pp, £18.99).

Like so many things these days, the book is vulnerable to built-in obsolescence – particularly as I have a perverse interest in already-ghostly figures such as Cyril Fletcher and Ruth, Lady Fermoy (whose name, for some reason, always makes me titter). Her full index-entry is 'Fermoy, Ruth, Lady: rejoices at the Queen Mother breaking wind 112 (and footnote); begs like dog 182; plays "Any

Old Iron” 212–13.’ Needless to say, all those jokes are based around the idea of their unlikelihood – but who, in a few years’ time, will be able to recollect that Ruth, Lady Fermoy would have taken a fierce pride in not breaking wind, or begging like a dog, or leading cockney sing-songs?

Craig Brown, ‘Craig’s list’, *The Guardian*, 2 October 2010.

Jones and Barlett: *Theoretical foundations of health education and health promotions*, by Manoj Sharma and John Albert Romas (2008, 263 pp, \$69.95). Rev. by Louise Rowling, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, 34(1), 2010.

In reviewing the Index notable omissions in content become apparent, such as inequalities, population health and social context. This is an indication of the limitations of this text in that the theories and models included focus almost exclusively on behaviour change for individuals, without balancing that content with attention to the wider social determinants of health.

MacKeith Press: *Diseases of the nervous system in childhood*, by Jean Aicardi (3rd edn, 2009, 912 pp, £175). Rev. by Rachel Kneen, *Advances in Clinical Neuroscience and Rehabilitation*, 10(4), September/October 2010.

The most valuable feature of the book is the depth of clinical information covered. However, the most common reason for using a book like this may be to help in the investigation of a child where the diagnosis is still unknown. So what may have been helpful is to somehow give a differential diagnosis for diseases that you may be considering using the clinical features that you have found on examination or on early investigations. One possible way of doing this would be to use the index to link all conditions together that share particular features, for example particular MRI abnormalities.

Plus ça change . . .

An article in *NRC-Handelsblad* (23 November 2010) announced that the library of the Peace Palace in The Hague had bought a first edition of the book *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* by Hugo Grotius. The book was published in 1625 and only two copies of the first edition remain, one at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and the other one now at the Peace Palace in The Hague. The final paragraph says: ‘The first edition was prepared in great haste, because Grotius wanted to present the book at the Frankfurt Book Fair of 1625. This is why the book contains many typesetting errors and lacks an index.’ [Translation by Caroline Diepeveen, who sent the item and comments: ‘Well, it seems not much has changed in the book trade in almost 400 years. I never knew the Frankfurt Book Fair was that old, by the way.’]

Rummagings

I have refrained from charging myself or any colleague with the labour of compiling an index. Such an index could expedite the studies only, I like indolently to think, of those who will be writing Doctoral Dissertations; and for them the chore of rummaging for themselves will be more rewarding than would be their inheritance of the proceeds of other people’s rummagings.

Gilbert Ryle, *Collected papers*, vol. II (Hutchinson, 1971)

The struggles of Mariella

In a recent interview Mariella Frostrup confessed that she loved all books except biographies. They were almost always too long,

she calculated – it took ages struggling through their hefty printed pages looking for what she wanted. In an age of instant information, biography belonged to a buried past.

If only she had reached the end of these biographies, I remember thinking, she would have discovered an index to help her find quite quickly whatever it was that she wanted.

Michael Holroyd, ‘Telling the secret lives of others’, *The Times*, 2 October 2010

Judas?

Brendan Kennelly and I had a great working relationship when I was editing *The Book of Judas* (Bloodaxe, 1991). He gave me a pile of around 1,000 poems and I had to hack them down to 400 pages. . . . There are also some mischievous entries in the index – which I compiled and he didn’t proof read – such as, ‘The Lost Poems of Judas’, where you turn to the page and find that it’s blank. Or piss-takes in the index of first lines, like: ‘The first time I slept with Madonna, she . . .’ and when you turn to that page, it’s blank as well.

Neil Astley, quoted in *The British book trade: an oral history*, ed. by Sue Bradley (British Library, 2008)

[Let’s just hope this rather reprehensible trick didn’t spoil the ‘great working relationship’.]

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