

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; Indexes censured; Indexes omitted; Obiter dicta.

Indexes praised

Cambridge University Press: *Ireland: a history*, by Thomas Bartlett (2010, 648 pp, €31.25). Rev. by Kevin Whelan, *History Ireland*, September/October 2010.

In general, Cambridge has produced the volume handsomely, with a generous page size, readable font size, an excellent index, eleven crisp and elegant maps, and 90 illustrations.

Collins Press: *Great endeavour: Ireland's Antarctic explorers*, by Michael Smith (2010, 265 pp, £26.99). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, March 2011.

It is superbly produced by the Collins Press with a judicious mixture of old and new photographs, together with easy-to-follow maps, good archive sources and a comprehensive index.

Edinburgh University Press: *Islamic finance in the global economy*, by I. Warde (2010, 276 pp, £75). Rev. by 'A Customer', www.amazon.com, 13 February 2010.

While the book's lucid and fluid style makes it accessible to those who are new to the subject, it will be equally valuable to those well versed in the subject: academics, experts, Shari'ah advisers . . . Indeed it is heavily footnoted and has a comprehensive index.

Facet Publishing: *Introducing RDA: a guide to the basics*, by Chris Oliver (2010, 124 pp, £29.95). Rev. by Karen Attar, *CILIP Update*, April 2011.

The layout of the book is clear and its bibliography and index excellent.

Four Courts Press: *From the Viking word hoard: a dictionary of Scandinavian words in the languages of Britain and Ireland*, by Diarmaid Ó Muirthe (2010, 331 pp, €50). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, October 2010.

There is also an index of Scandinavian words, referring the reader to the key words under which they appear.

Harper Press: *The invention of murder: how the Victorians revelled in death and detection and created modern crime*, by Judith Flanders (2011, 556 pp, £20). Rev. by Jonathan Barnes, *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 April 2011.

For all that society evolved in the Victorian century, what has

become most apparent by the end of Flanders's impressively thorough book (both bibliography and index are excellent) is how little things have changed.

Irish Graves Publications: *They died by Pearse's side*, by Ray Bates (360 pp, €19.99). Rev. by 'Bookworm', *History Ireland*, January/February 2011.

It is properly indexed and referenced . . .

Liverpool University Press: *Public sculpture of Bristol*, by Douglas Merritt, Francis Greenacre and Katherine Eustace (2011, 306 pp, £60). Rev. in *Bristol Evening Post*, 5 February 2011.

A real treasure trove, with a wealth of information. . . It's not just a question of finding these works of art – there's also the problem of understanding them, a difficult task without a knowledgeable guide and one which this well-illustrated and well-indexed book should now make a lot easier. [*Index by SI member Susan Tricklebank.*]

Mercier Press: *Renegades: Irish republican women*, by Ann Matthews (2010, 416 pp, €19.99). Rev. by 'Bookworm', *History Ireland*, September/October 2010.

There is also a good index . . .

Oxford University Press: *The Oxford history of the laws of England 1820-1914*, vol. XI, *English legal system*; vol. XII, *Private law*; vol. XIII, *Fields of development*, ed. by William Cornish et al. (2010, 3,571 pp, £495). Rev. by Stephen Sedley, *London Review of Books*, 28 April 2011.

While each [volume] is separately indexed, the index of the third volume is comprehensive – valuably, since each of the main sections could very well stand on its own as a book.

Pied Piper Publishing: *Going graphic: comics and graphic novels for young people*, ed. by Bridget Carrington and Jennifer Harding (2010, 258 pp, £20). Rev. by Sue Mansfield, *IBBYLink* (journal of the UK branch of International Books for Young People), May 2011.

Helpfully, as this is an area of study that is still new to many, it also provides a glossary of terms as well as a good index. [*Index by SI member and co-editor of the book Jennifer Harding.*]

Sams: *Red hat Linux and fedora unleashed*, by Bill Ball and Hoyt Duff (2004, 1080 pp). Rev. by Daniel A. Segel, www.amazon.com, 18 July 2004.

. . . the index is also great. A good and usable index is a hard thing to produce. Most publishers seem to be letting software build the index and then never bother to have a human check it out. I don't need index references that point me to every single page that mentions the word or topic I'm trying to look up, but that's what you get with most Linux books. For the index in *Red hat Linux and fedora unleashed* the publisher either used a human being or has smarter indexing software.

Westminster/John Knox Press: *I, II, and III John: a commentary (New Testament Library)*, by Judith M. Lieu (2008, 336 pp, £32.99). Rev. by Simon P. Woodman, *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*, 35(2).

Greek terms are presented in transliteration, always accompanied by a translation, and the book is completed by a comprehensive index of subjects and ancient sources.

Indexes censured

Churchill Livingstone: *The foundations of Chinese medicine: a comprehensive text for acupuncturists and herbalists*, by Giovanni Maciocia (2nd edn, July 2005, 1236 pp, \$126). Rev. by David Laverdure, www.amazon.com, 30 January 2007.

As a matter of presentation, description, and explanation, this book is near unmatched. When the revision of this edition comes out, if you have any desire to explore and develop your understanding of TCM, you will have to get it. But wait until they repair the index. It is the lousiest, most absurd index I've ever seen. I work as a Teacher's Assistant for an Asian Bodywork Therapy class, so I get a lot of questions from students, and this text has everything you would ever want to look up, if only you happen to be so lucky that the index and the actual material you're looking for match up. So, like I said, everything about this book but the index is fantastic. The index is so bad, though, the book deserves a recall. Wait until that happens, or pour [sic] through the pages with unmatched patience, and make your own index.

Cincinnati Hebrew Union College Press: *Yannai on Genesis: an invitation to piyyut*, by Laura S. Lieber (2010, 500 pp, \$59.50). Rev. by Debra Blank on *H-Judaic* (April 2011), <https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=30605>

Smaller bones for picking relate to physical or technical matters. One is the woefully inadequate index, not befitting such a large and important volume. But we all know what kinds of budgets exist for indexers these days.

Martinus Nijhoff: *The relationship between state and individual responsibility for international crimes*, by Beatrice I. Bonafe (2009, xii + 281 pp, \$160). Rev. by Mary Rumsey, *International Journal of Legal Information*, 38(3), Winter 2010.

The Index, while intelligent, is too brief. For example, it has no separate entry for terms like 'command responsibility' or 'aiding and abetting' – these terms appear only under the entry 'modes of liability'. It is worth mentioning that Martinus Nijhoff has made the book available on Google Book Search, which compensates in part for the lack of a more detailed index. Inclusion in Google Book Search will also increase citations to, and demand for, the work.

Other Press: *How to live: a life of Montaigne in one question and twenty attempts at an answer*, by Sarah Bakewell (2010, 400 pp, \$25). Rev. by Lorin Stein, *Harper's Magazine*, January 2011.

It is hard to imagine a better introduction – or reintroduction – to Montaigne than Bakewell's book. It is easy to imagine small improvements, however. . . . And someone really should have sprung for a better index: such a freewheeling book could use a good one.

Charles T Thomas: *The renal patient's guide to good eating: a cookbook for patients by a patient*, by Judith A. Curtis (1989,

199 pp, £119.95). Rev. by Michael Thomas, www.amazon.com, 30 September 2004.

There are several major categories in the index, such as Bread, Desserts, Poultry, Meat, and so on. The major sections are listed alphabetically and then all of the various index entries for each food type are listed alphabetically in each major category. In typesetting the index, however, someone included capital letters, such as 'A' preceding the Appetizer section, and this shouldn't have been done because of the way the index was compiled and it may be confusing at first glance. Steps are being taken to modify this in future printings, but the book has sold very well for the publisher.

Westview Press: *Real variables*, by Alberto Torchinsky (1995, 416 pp, \$79). Rev. by dawg, www.amazon.com, 11 January 2009.

I have only perused the book in anticipation of an upcoming class, and used it as a supplemental text to Royden's *Real Analysis*. The one-star rating I have given at this point applies only to the index, which is abysmal. The index groups each term under the category to which it belongs. For example, when I look for 'Radon-Nikodym Theorem,' it is not located in the 'R' section. It is instead in 'S' under 'Signed Measure' as the main heading with 'Radon-Nikodym Theorem' as a subheading! Now, such a topic-oriented index may well be useful, but it should be in addition to the standard index, not in place of it! As another example, if one wants to see what Torchinsky has to say about 'spectral decomposition,' one must look not in the 'S' section but rather the 'C' section under 'Compact mapping' where 'spectral decomposition' exists as a subheading! This flaw is particularly annoying when using the book as a reference text in support of another text. The index is virtually worthless in this case, unless one is willing to scan the index for each topic of interest. Which, by the way, is not that difficult since the index is only 4.5 pages long.

Indexes omitted

Black Dog: *Aftermath: selected writings 1960-2010*, by Ronald Blythe, ed. by Peter Tolhurst (2010, 487 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Peter Parker, *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 March 2011.

Gratitude for what is included far outweighs quibbles about what is not, but the publisher ought surely to have provided an index.

Currach Press: *A tale of two cities*, by John Hall (2009, 128 pp, €20). Rev. by Hugh Oram, *Books Ireland*, September 2010.

The book itself has one drawback: no index.

Liffey Press: *Roots and routes: memoirs and musings of a Dublin nomad*, by Brendan Cardiff (363 pp, €24.95). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, September 2010.

It's a handsome big book, with no index.

Lilliput Press: *Desmond Leslie 1921-2001: the biography of an Irish gentleman*, by Robert O'Byrne (2010, 216 pp, €25). Rev. by Patricia Craig, *Irish Times*, 23 October 2010.

There is no index.

Nonsuch (Now History Press): *The Charlestown chronicles*, by Cathal Henry (160 pp, €16). Rev. by Hugh Oram, *Books Ireland*, December 2010.

While Cathal Henry's book has a great selection of admirable

photographs, the actual organisation of the book seems somewhat disorganised and it also suffers by not having an index.

Pickering and Chatto: *The collected letters of Ellen Terry*, ed. by Katharine Cockin (vol. 1, 2010, 288 pp; vol. 2, 2011, 232 pp, £100 each). Rev. by John Stokes, *Times Literary Supplement*, 1 April 2011.

It has to be said that this edition is so far a feat of retrieval and organization rather than of annotation. Not only are the biographical notes intermittent, they sometimes consist only of directions to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* or, more occasionally but more alarmingly, to the *Concise Oxford Companion to the Theatre*, published in 1972. What might look like a sensible piece of intellectual recycling turns out to be a false economy when the dictionary entry doesn't contain the information needed to establish a precise connection. . . . Even when the notes do contain relevant facts they can be confusing, since one and the same person may have two or more separate biographical entries, each augmenting and sometimes even contradicting the other. . . . As there are no indexes, such staggered and patchy bits of information leave one's fingers stumbling through the volumes trying to keep a place while collating the various entries. Even Irving's dog, Fussie, is given three different entries – but no early warning that he would die melodramatically by falling through a trapdoor at the Lyceum. [*Let us hope there will be a cumulative index in vol. 3, to be published in March 2012.*]

University of Texas Press: *Oaxaca al gusto: an infinite gastronomy*, by Diana Kennedy (2011, 436 pp, \$50). Rev. by Alma Guillermopreto, *New York Review of Books*, 28 April 2011.

The book itself is beautiful, chock-full of photographs, many of them lovely and most taken by the author. But though it looks ready for the coffee table it clearly aims to be the definitive work on the subject. To shore up that claim a few Oaxaca experts have been rounded up to provide essays that could just as easily have been left out. (Although what inexplicably *has* been left out is an alphabetical index.) What counts is the collection of recipes . . .

Watchword: *Dear comrade: SIPTU 1910–2010*, ed. by Jack McGinley (2010, 176 pp, €30). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, December 2010.

If nothing else it is a very useful reference book on SIPTU [the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union], although an index is lacking.

Obiter dicta

Gill & Macmillan: *The Irish Times book of the year*, ed. by Peter Murtagh (2010, 295 pp, €26.99). Rev. by Bridget Hourican, *Irish Times*, 4 December 2010.

Squee is another motif. I had no idea until I perused this annual that *The Irish Times* went in for so much squee. But who could blame it? Times are hard: we need something as uncomplicatedly cute as orphaned baby hedgehogs to cheer us up. ('Squee' is not in the index, and I have no idea if it's in the Scrabble dictionary, but it's the sound you make when you turn to page 223 and see said orphaned baby hedgehogs. . .) [*Index by SI Irish Group member Helen Litton.*]

Not obsessive enough?

The third edition [of Strunk & White's *The elements of style*] was eventually enhanced by the addition of an index - a feature that

readers and teachers had been requesting since the first edition. In January 1981, a teacher offered Tony English an index he had made for his own classroom use. White and English decided to incorporate it into the book, it was edited at Macmillan, and it debuted in the seventh printing of the third edition, in September 1981. The index added yet another seven pages to the total, bringing the book to a still-svelte ninety-two pages.

Stylized: a slightly obsessive history of Strunk & White's The elements of style, by Mark Garvey (Touchstone Books, 2009)

[*Unfortunately, Stylized, despite including many names of authors, other books and contributors, itself has no index!*]

What Coleridge thought

The great drawback of [Kathleen] Coburn's edition of [Samuel Taylor Coleridge's] Notebooks is the lack of a subject index. An electronic index is under construction at the University of Alberta, but until it is available, readers who want to know what Coleridge thought on a given topic and need more than samples will have to plough through the whole lot on their own. But the scale of the Notebooks is intimidating; readers may be grateful for a guide. (They could turn to the keyword indexes of the Collected Coleridge which contain many cross-references to the Notebooks; but ploughing through is more rewarding - or to use Lamb's word, more fun.)

H. J. Jackson, 'Best order: how bigger pictures of Coleridge emerge from the detailed work of his editors', *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 March 2011

Culture vultures

Certainly, journals of the past often give the impression that it was once common for Britain to be governed by culture vultures who dabbled in legislation. The index of the second volume of Richard Crossman's diaries, for example – covering a period when he was a cabinet minister – is studded with entries such as 'attends *Much Ado about Nothing*', 'goes to *Das Rheingold*', and 'sees *Space Odyssey 2001*'.

Mark Lawson, 'A night in with Trollope', *The Guardian*, 30 May 2011

Money penny mention

My final eating date that week with a woman I admire was a dinner at the Berkeley Hotel to celebrate the launch of Lynda Gratton's book, *The Shift*. The food was excellent, and, even better, she had remembered to order some for me. Also, not only was I mentioned in the book but – and this is a first for me – I have made it into the index. [*Well, I should hope so.*]

'Mrs Moneypenny', *Financial Times*, 28/29 May 2011.

All that jazz

There's music they call jazz and music they call blues and then rock 'n' roll and gospel and pop, but these names, they are just rubbish. Unless you run a record shop and need to make categories, they are rubbish. There are only two types of music; there's good music and bad music. The rest is just indexing.

Hugh Laurie, *Perspectives: down by the river*, ITV1, 15 May 2011

A bookworm's feast

... after retrieving a boxful of old books from a shed [I discovered] that a bookworm – or several bookworms – had been feasting on them in my absence.

Bookworms are not worms, as readers may know. The word is a popular misnomer for a range of insects, including the tiny common booklouse, which had probably been the guilty party in this case. The critter's Latin name, *liposcelis divinatorius*, makes it sound a bit like a scholar – one with a doctorate in theology even. But there was nothing divine about its work.

The books damaged included my treasured school copy of FSL Lyons's *Ireland Since the Famine*; although happily, as journalists on a deadline often do, the louse had confined himself mainly to the index.

Frank McNally, 'An Irishman's diary', *Irish Times*,
5 March 2011

Not met

The Oldie magazine has for years had a column called 'I Once Met'. I wonder how famous one has to be to appear in it as a 'not met'. I got into an index in that guise. To my amazement, when I first flipped through the index to Anthony Powell's autobiography before reading it, I came upon my own name. Hill, Susan. Novelist. (Not Met.) [*An interesting gloss for use by biographical indexers.*]

Susan Hill, *Howard's End is on the landing*
(Profile Books, 2009)

Thankless task

'Literary executor!' Michael said. 'That sounds very grand. Or is it one of those literary thankless tasks, like doing an index or something?'

Hazel Holt, *Fatal legacy* (Macmillan, 1999)

Warm thanks to the contributors to this section:

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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).



Of friendship, treachery and stained glass

The English Friend

a biography of the first duke of Suffolk (1396–1450)

by Susan Curran

Published August 2011 in paperback and electronic formats
Illustrated throughout in colour, with many details of stained
glass from England and France (and two indexes)
see www.theenglishfriend.com for details

The year after the Cornish coastguard's cottage, it is a loaned bungalow on the West Coast of Scotland. Rain drumming on the corrugated iron roof makes a stimulating background rhythm for my work on the index of a book about Italian cooking. Thank heaven for these wet Augusts. In what other climate could one do three months' work during a fortnight's holiday? *Gragnano, grancevole, grignolino, gorgonzola, granite, San Gimignano, no, Genoa, ginipro*. L comes in drenched but with a fresh supply of Dainty Dinah toffees ... Lacrima Christi, lamb, lampreys, lambrusco, lasagne ... All right, on with our Wellingtons and sou'westers. As it turns out the fisherman is not selling crabs and lobsters, nobody eats them here, nasty dirty things, they are for despatch to a fish paste factory in Yorkshire. I am relieved. too soon. He holds out a great rogue crab. Here, take this. Sixpence. 'How shall I cook him? In boiling water or cold?'

'Boiling.'

'The RSPCA says –'

'Don't know about that –'

'– cruel –'

'Dirty beast. Let him suffer it out.'

Elizabeth David, from an article in the
Spectator of 24 August 1962, reprinted in
An Omelette and a Glass of Wine,
published by Grub Street, 1984.