

an index) requires something different from indexing other works of scholarship, as the indexer needs to make connections between entries and to provide the reader with an alternative way of accessing the work. In this case, this difficult task was accomplished with scholarly authority. Excellent use was made of reader-friendly devices, and the consistent practice of translating foreign language terms made the text accessible to a less specialist audience. The layout was extremely attractive and easy on the eye, and double postings adroitly done. Especial mention needs to be made of the scrupulous editing of the index: no one on the judging panel found any clues to the fact that this index was compiled by a team, which means that the overall editing to combine three people's work must have been very thoroughly done. This is no mean feat in an index of this size. In short, the panel was deeply impressed. A most deserving winner.

Highly commended: Joan Dearnley for her index to *The Edinburgh Companion to Virginia Woolf and the Arts* (edited by M. Humm and published by Edinburgh University Press in 2010).

Commended: Barbara Hird for her indexes to the *New Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. 1 (edited by C. F. Robinson)

and vol. 4 (edited by R. Irwin, both published by Cambridge University Press in 2010).

Betty Moys Prize for the best newly accredited indexer (2010)

This prize went to Marie-Pierre Evans.

Editorial note: It was particularly pleasing to find the award of the Wheatley Medal reported in detail in the *Times Literary Supplement (TLS)* of 16 September 2011, under the heading 'M is for Medal'. Quoting Jonathan Swift's advice to 'get a thorough insight into the Index, by which the whole book is governed and turned, like fishes by the tail', the article went on to sympathize with indexers and the tendency for reviewers to acknowledge them only to point out sloppiness or error; and to offer congratulations to this year's winners.

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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

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: *The Tao of travel*, by Paul Theroux (2011, 304 pp, \$25). Rev. by Gaylord Dodd, *The Oregonian*, 30 July 2011.

An excellent index refers the reader to numerous writers and their works.

Oxford University Press: *A merciless place: the lost story of Britain's convict disaster in Africa*, by Emma Christopher (2011, 432 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Spectator*, 30 July 2011.

. . . the temper of the book — and the degree to which the story carries you over the shortcomings of its telling — is actually best captured by part of its scholarly apparatus. *A Merciless Place* has a first-class index. Under 'Mackenzie', for instance, you glance at the L–M section and see 'leads attack on fishermen. . . life before Africa. . . loses his mind. . . men refuse to serve under. . .' and then in T–U, you find 'turned out of Mori naked. . . ungentlemanly

vocabulary of. . . unhappy with portrait. . .'. Any book that boasts such an index is well worth an afternoon or two of your time.

Oxford University Press: *The Pronomos vase and its context*, ed. by Oliver Taplin and Rosie Wyles (2011, 420 pp, £85). Rev. by A. M. Snodgrass, *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 May 2011.

[This book] satisfies two fundamental requirements. First, among the fourteen scholars who come together here, from five different countries and from every appropriate branch of the discipline, the editors have invariably chosen exactly the right person to deal with each aspect. Secondly, the volume bears the stamp of unusually careful editing and integration: the various contributors not only cite each other's papers, but make use of each other's illustrations; best of all, there is an exceptionally good index, making it possible to locate every comment, identification or citation.

Two cheers!

Yale University Press: *The eighteenth-century church in Britain*, by Terry Friedman (2011, 790 pp, £60). Rev. by Thomas Keymer, *Times Literary Supplement*, 24 June 2011.

Excellent use is made of travel books such as Daniel Defoe's *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, which is frequently quoted, but it is an oddity that this category of source is excluded from the otherwise comprehensive index, which moves from 'Decarle, Robert (bricklayer)' to 'Dening, Thomas (carpenter)'

with no Defoe between them – a bracingly democratic effect, in tune with Friedman’s respect for everyone (apart from the occasional cowboy builder) involved in church-building, but not well tailored to the reader.

Indexes censured

University of Texas Press: *Spies and holy wars: the Middle East in twentieth-century crime fiction*, by Reeva Spector Simon (2010, 216 pp, \$55/£37). Rev. by Robert Irwin, *Times Literary Supplement*, 19/26 August 2011.

Both the index and the bibliography of *Spies and Holy Wars* are lacunary.

Indexes omitted

Abacus: *The 100 words that make the English*, by Tony Thorne (2011, 345 pp, £8.99). Rev. by Christopher Hirst, *The Independent*, 15 April 2011.

Deftly unpacking such potent tags as ‘chippy’, ‘clever’ and ‘Kevin’ (‘one of many synonyms for the new, feckless underclass’), Thorne gives us much to laugh at and, occasionally, argue with. It is interesting to learn that ‘sarky’ (first cited in the OED from D. H. Lawrence in 1912) has recently been hybridised with snide by ‘internet geeks’ to produce ‘snarky’. Is it snarky to point out that exploration of this lively work would have been much assisted by a contents page and/or index?

Bloomsbury: *The house in France: a memoir*, by Gully Wells (2011, 307 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Cressida Connolly, *The Spectator*, 2 July 2011.

It’s a nuisance that there is no index, although perhaps a wise omission by the publishers. The book might be more browsed through than bought if it were easier to cherry-pick from its pages.

Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie: *Les collections électroniques, une nouvelle politique documentaire*, ed. by P. Carbone and F. Cavalier (2009, 312 pp, €39). Rev. by Ralph Adam, *CILIP Update*, June 2011.

It seems churlish to complain about anything in such an excellent work, but a detailed index would have usefully accompanied the substantial international list of abbreviations.

Hamish Hamilton: *Nocturne: a journey in search of moonlight*, by James Attlee (2011, 320 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Peter Pesic, *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 August 2011.

It is a pity that, describing many works of art in detail, the book contains only one illustration. It would also have profited from an index and a list of works consulted.

Harper Press: *The bicycle book*, by Bella Bathurst (2011, 306 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Richard Ormrod, *The Tablet*, 4 June 2011.

This is a book for the uninitiated, well researched, with glossary, bibliography and illustrations, but alas, no index.

No Starch Press: *Snip, burn, solder, shred: seriously geeky stuff to make with your children*, by David Erik Nelson (2010, 342 pp, £19.99). Rev. in *Library Journal*, 1 March 2011.

The organization is poor, and the lack of an index doesn’t help.

One World Books: *Constantinople*, by Edmondo De Amicis, translated by Stephen Parkin (2010, 290 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Roderick Conway Morris, *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 September 2011.

Parkin has been let down by the publishers, who have not only failed to provide a table of contents, let alone an index, but have put on the cover a skyline of Mamluk domes and minarets from Cairo.

Prospect: *Cured, fermented and smoked foods*, ed. by Helen Saberi (2011, 400 pp, £30). Rev. by R. D. Smith, *The Guardian*, 13 August 2011.

The lack of an index in what is a scholarly work is disappointing, but this is a wonderful celebration of global food culture: detailed yet never indigestible.

Tempus: *Scottish monastic landscapes*, by Derek Hall (2006, 222 pp, £19.99). Rev. by David Robinson, *Post-medieval Archaeology*, 41(2), 2007.

The production values in the book reflect the track record of this particular publisher. . . . The quality and reproduction of the black and white photographs is poor, the collection of colour plates hardly inspires, and the maps are something of a mixed-bag. Worse still, and inexcusable, there is no index.

Obiter dicta

Myrtle Press: *And God created Burton*, by Tom Rubython (2011, 812 pp, £20). Rev. by Byron Rogers, *The Spectator*, 2 July 2011.

Its index is so long and the print so small it could only be read by a hunting eagle.

Yale University Press: *Boredom: a lively history*, by Peter Toohey (224 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Tim Heald, *The Tablet*, 2 July 2011.

I am fascinated by the recipes for old age advanced by Toohey’s late Auntie Madge but unconvinced that they (or she) belong in the pages of academic literature. This is in no sense to decry Madge’s credentials but if her nephew really believed in her, why is she not included somewhere in the index, around the entry for René Magritte?

Bias in indexing

[The Sykes–Picot Agreement] was sealed in 1916 between Sir Mark Sykes, an MP with an undeserved reputation as a regional expert (he spoke neither Turkish nor Arabic and wrote a book on the Ottoman Empire that indexed ‘Arab character: see also Treachery’) and François Georges-Picot, a French diplomat.

Michael Binyon, ‘Britain and a bloody carve-up’
(review of *Line in the Sand*, by James Barr,
Simon & Schuster, 2011), *The Times*, 30 July 2011

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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).