

# 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; Indexes censured; Indexes omitted; Obiter dicta.*

## Indexes praised

**Allen Lane:** *Seasons in the sun: the battle for Britain, 1974–1979*, by Dominic Sandbrook (2012, 992 pp, £30). Rev. by Hugh Muir, 'Diary', *The Guardian*, 24 April 2012.

Finally, to our book of the week. And who better to lead us through reminiscences of Britain in the 1970s than the historian Dominic Sandbrook. His 970-page hardback volume *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979*, has much to say in its text about why we are where we are, and who we can reasonably blame. But for all the crafted prose, what we really like is the index. Let's start with that towering figure in the national life of the seventies, Tony Benn. 'Airy-fairy stuff,' page 36; 'consoles himself with new quartz clock computer, 649'; 'fails to take part in orgies, 154'; 'has the most ghastly piles, 786'; 'inhales his own rhetoric, 273'; 'as a madman, 275-6, 329-30'; and 'on the towering genius of Mao Tse-tung, 488-9'. Denis Healey is part of the story, too. Just two mentions: 'Does the choo-choo train, 504'; 'tells the left to go and fuck themselves, 423'. Thatcher, Callaghan et al, they're all there.

25 April 2012

Back to the 70s, courtesy of Dominic Sandbrook's new book *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979*. We like the text. But more than that we like the index. The big beasts of the time are all there. 'Heath, Edward: Leans nonchalantly on an Italian deep-freeze, page 425', 'stacks books on his chairs to stop Thatcher sitting down, 257', 'stares at Thatcher with undisguised hatred, 258, 324'. Also 'unconvincing attempt to look cuddly', on page 158. There's 'Wilson, Harold: Compares himself to a big fat spider, 452', 'complains of the "squitters", 38, 418' – poor Harold. And on page 39, Wilson 'polishes off five brandies', then 'polishes off six brandies'. Was that to cure the squitters? Sandbrook doesn't say.

26 April 2012

But still there are more laughs in Sandbrook's book *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974–1979*. Particularly in the index, where we find Jim Callaghan 'shocked by impersonation of homosexual cook' on page 462 and 'as a gnarled tree' a bit later. There's 'Crosland, Anthony: Tells Hattersley to fuck off.' This one, we recognise. 'Jenkins, Roy: Has lunch'.

27 April 2012

All week we've been reviewing the 1970s via the curious index of Dominic Sandbrook's new history, *Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain 1974–1979*. And throughout the question has lingered, what does he have to say about Margaret Thatcher and the Tory former

home secretary Reginald Maudling? Each made their contribution to the national life; thus each has a place in Sandbrook's evocation. There's Maudling: 'drinks a jug of Dubonnet and gin'; 'likened Thatcher to a grub'; and 'summons up enough energy to be quite rude'. As for Thatcher herself, she 'likes to be made a fuss of by a lot of chaps'. Later, she 'makes a mess of some Cadbury Creme Eggs'. The least of her crimes, we think.

**Apress:** *The definitive guide to Drupal 7*, by Benjamin Melançon et al (2011, 1,047 pp, £39.49). Rev. by Jonathan Roberts, *Linux Format (LXF)*, 158, June 2012.

We were also delighted that a book of this size comes with a comprehensive index. You're never going to read it cover to cover, and a strong index is vital for a reference volume such as this.

**Ashfield Press:** *The Goodbodyys: millers, merchants and manufacturers – the story of an Irish Quaker family, 1630–1950*, by Michael Goodbody (532 pp, 335). Rev. by Florence O'Donoghue, *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 April 2012.

... splendidly bibliographed and indexed ...

**Cambridge University Press:** *The letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. II: 1941–1956*, ed. by George Craig et al. (2009, 885 pp, £30). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, November 2011.

The mechanics at the end provide profiles of about sixty people who figure in the book, and there's an index to letter recipients in addition to a general one.

**Collins Press:** *Wildflowers of Ireland: a personal record*, by Zoë Devlin (2011, 432 pp, €26.99). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, April 2012.

The book concludes with a very useful section on further reading as well as an equally workmanlike index that lists both common and Latin names for wildflowers.

**Facet:** *Museum collections management*, ed. by Freda Matassa (2011, 258 pp, £54.95). Rev. by Diana Dixon, *CILIP Update*, April 2012.

The work is supported by a short but relevant bibliography and an excellent index.

**Hardie Grant Books:** *William Lawrence Baillieu*, by Peter Yule (2012, 423 pp, \$65). Rev. by Ross Fitzgerald, *Weekend Australian*, 25–29 April 2012.

Replete with illustrations, thoroughly researched, amply footnoted and with a very helpful index, Yule's portrait of this energetic Melbourne and Australian man of business is well worth reading.

**National Liberal Club:** *A guide to the works of art of the National Liberal Club* (2nd edn), by Michael Meadowcroft (2011). Rev. by Jonathan Calder, *Liberal Democrat News*, no. 1182, 23 March 2012.

... its indexes of artists and sitters make it easy to use.

**O'Brien Press:** *Celtic names for children*, by Loretto Todd (191 pp, €9.99/€7.99). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, March 2012.

More than two thousand names from Brittany, Cornwall, Wales, Man, Ireland and Scotland, with derivation, associated myths and pronunciation notes, cross-referenced with variant spellings, and with exhaustive indexes by gender and region. A very thoroughgoing and useful reference.

**Rosenberg Publishing:** *Undies to equities*, by Henri Aram with Michael Visontay (2012, 240 pp, \$29.95). Rev. by Ross Fitzgerald, *Weekend Australian*, 25–29 April 2012.

Replete with a number of illuminating, and often touching, black and white and coloured photographs, Aram's captivating book also has a helpful index, which is so often missing from books published in Australia today. [Index by ANZSI member Glenda Browne.]

**Schuman Publishers:** *Collection development and management for 21st century library collections: an introduction*, by Vicki L. Gregory (2011, xvii + 261 pp, £64.95). Rev. by Claire Buckley, *CILIP Update*, May 2012.

As well as references and selected reading for each chapter, there is a lengthy bibliography and a thorough index.

**Thames & Hudson:** *A new history of Italian Renaissance art*, by Stephen J. Campbell and Michael W. Cole (2012, 680 pp, £45). Rev. by Eileen Battersby, *Irish Times*, 5 May 2012.

This is an informed, enlightened and useful book: its index, notes, sources and bibliography are valuable, while its chronological methodology will reinvigorate the teaching of art history.

**Wallstein (Göttingen):** *Rahel: ein Buch des Andenkens für ihre Freunde*, by Rahel Levin Varnhagen, ed. by Barbara Hahn (6 vols, 2011, 3,309 pp, €69). Rev. by Maren Meinhardt, *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 April 2012.

We owe much to Barbara Hahn and her collaborators for having helped her do this. They have faced a huge task in corralling material which had been out of public view for over sixty years, while carefully documenting each stage in their reconstruction and providing a complete index of people, character sketches of Rahel's correspondents, and even an index of open as well as hidden quotations. The result is a careful and thoughtful edition faithful to both Rahel and [Karl August] Varnhagen, which makes Rahel's life's work accessible to us again.

**Wiley-Blackwell:** *The history of English spelling*, by Christopher Upward and George Davidson (2012, 392 pp, £55). Rev. by Tom Shippey, *Times Literary Supplement*, 25 May 2012.

Each chapter is organized by letters, in alphabetical order. This is not, in other words, a book easily read. The most convenient way to use it may be to look up individual words for their histories in the forty-page word index.

**Yellow Jersey Press:** *Merckx: half man, half bike*, by William Fotheringham (2012, 309 pp, £16.99).

**Ebury Press:** *Eddy Merckx: the cannibal*, by Daniel Friebe (2012, 352 pp, £16.99).

Both rev. by John Foot, *Times Literary Supplement*, 27 April 2012.

Fotheringham's book is better produced, with a striking dust jacket and subtitle, an excellent index and a lovingly compiled

list of major victories, both of which are absent from the Friebe volume.

## Indexes censured

**Clifton Catholic Diocesan Trustees:** *Clifford of Clifton (1823–1893): England's youngest Catholic bishop*, by J. A. Harding (2011, 523 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Peter Phillips, *The Tablet*, 21 April 2012.

Although it is a significant study of an important English bishop and contains much fascinating material, more rigorous editing would have made it a better book. It is peppered with typographical errors and let down seriously by a poor index.

**Equinox:** *2012: decoding the countercultural apocalypse*, ed. by Joseph Gelfer (2011, 203 pp, £60). Rev. by Peter Brookesmith, *Fortean Times*, FT288 Special, 2012.

The index is skimpy, verging on the useless – which is a bit bloody rich given the book's stupefying price.

**Methodist Publishing:** *Singing the faith* (2011, 1728 pp, £30). Rev. by Anne Harrison, *Sunday by Sunday* (journal of the Royal School of Church Music), no. 60.

For rapid reference, I would have liked more specific index headings.

**Prospect:** *Testicles: balls in cooking and culture*, by Blandine Vié, tr. by Giles MacDonogh (2011, 224 pp, £20). Rev. by Paul Levy, *Times Literary Supplement*, 2 March 2012.

Although the plethora of typefaces in *Testicles: Balls in cooking and culture* discourages the reader from proceeding from cover to cover, it is rewarding to dip into this strange and handsome volume, first published in France in 2005. In doing so, however, it is not easy to avoid passages on how castration is carried out, for despite the table of recipes at the back, this book is not entirely about food. A proper index would perhaps help the timid to skip these parts of the text.

**Reaktion:** *Wolf*, by Gary Marvin (2012, 224 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Steven Poole, *The Guardian*, 21 April 2012.

The book's index, sadly, is a skimpy two-page effort that is not much more useful than a single entry reading 'Wolf, passim'.

## Indexes omitted

**Atlantic:** *Full service: my adventures in Hollywood and the secret sex lives of the stars*, by Scotty Bowers with Lionel Friedberg (2012, 286 pp, £16.99). rev. by David Thomson, *The Observer*, 4 March 2012.

Neither does he supply his book with an index, so if you're interested in the secret sex lives of the stars, you are going to have to search through these pages for Spence and Kate, Eddie and Wally, Randy and Cary, Rock, Ty and Noel, and Vivien Leigh, who seems to have been the most enthusiastic and voluble bedmate of them all.

**Barbican Centre:** *Bauhaus: art as life* (2012, 272 pp, £29.95). Rev. by Brian Sewell, *Evening Standard*, 10 May 2012.

I have only one adverse criticism, and this is of the catalogue: 38 essays are all very well but the newcomer to the Bauhaus needs the

more basic instruction of a chronology, not only of the Bauhaus itself, but of related or parallel movements and the German politics of the day; he also needs brief biographies of the participants; and with the catalogue in its present form he needs, above all, an index.

**Cambridge Archaeological Unit:** *Borderlands: the archaeology of Addenbrooke's environs, South Cambridge*, by Christopher Evans et al (2008, 224 pp. £25). Rev. by Kasia Gdaniec, *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, vol. C (2011).

There is no index – lamented by this author whose copy is now beset with ribbons and tags marking key pages and passages, but that shortfall is offset by a good array of absolute dates, most helpful for artefact chronologies and the key changes and structures within the site (and probably kept the book at an affordable price!). [So that's all right then.]

**Emerald Group Publishing:** *Sustainable politics and the crisis of the peripheries: Ireland and Greece*, ed. by Liam Leonard and Iosif Botetzagias (2011, 235 pp, €89.95). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, May 2012.

Each chapter trails its own source notes, and there is no single bibliography and no index.

**Europa Editions:** *A day in the life of ancient Rome*, by Alberto Angela, tr. by Gregor Conti (2012, 384 pp, £11.99). Rev. by Thomas Hodgkinson, *The Spectator*, 7 April 2012.

We get nothing from Cicero's humanist letters, or Ovid's guide to getting laid. Barely a word from Horace, or Pliny, or Suetonius. And you can't look them up in the index, because there isn't one.

**Hamish Hamilton:** *As consciousness is harnessed to flesh: Diaries 1963–1980*, by Susan Sontag, ed. by David Rieff (2012, 544 pp, £18.99). Rev. by Anne Chisholm, *Sunday Telegraph*, 22 April 2012.

By the end, this long, untidy, sometimes obscure, occasionally infuriating (why is there no index?) volume, a tribute by a scrupulous son to his difficult, gifted mother, fully justifies the considerable effort the reader must make.

**HarperOne:** *Super immunity: the essential nutrition guide for boosting our body's defenses to live longer, stronger, and disease free*, by Joel Fuhrman (2011, 288 pp, £16.99). Rev. by MaHubs, 14 December 2011.

When you write a book full of medical details that the reader will want to refer to later, wouldn't you include an INDEX?! I don't see how this book can be of any meaningful good to me as it has been published . . . Buyer beware.

Rev. by Jeannie, 15 December 2011.

The only fault I find is that there is no index. A book containing a lot of detailed information about something as complex as nutrients and their effects on health and disease process really needs to have an index.

Rev. by Jake, 14 February 2012.

There is no index which you would normally find in any recipe book.

Rev. by Redgecko, 10 March 2012.

I'm reluctant to bash a book that promotes a vegetarian diet, but

I was disappointed to find that this book lacks an index. So, for instance, if you wanted to look up where a particular food, mineral or concept was discussed, you can't do it because there's no index. The table of contents is at such a high level as to be useless to find anything. Indexes can be generated automatically by computer software, so it's unacceptable for a reference book of this nature to be without an index.

Rev. by Bijou, 13 March 2012.

The only issue I have with this book is the lack of an index, but that doesn't make it any less worth reading. [All reviews from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk).]

**Hesperus Press:** *Brief lives: Virginia Woolf*, by E. H. Wright (2011, 144 pp, £7.99). Rev. by John Holding, *Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain Bulletin*, 40, May 2012.

Overall, I found this biography a little disappointing, perhaps because I felt that it had been rather too condensed in places. For example, Wright uses a very limited number of independent reference sources beyond Woolf's published works and private writings ('Notes', 127–9); references to madness appear frequently but not in quite the depth to provide adequate explanation nor to form a consistent theme; and the lack of an index I constantly found irritating. . . . Wright's book aims to satisfy the common reader, but my recommendation for a brief life of Virginia Woolf would be either of the illustrated biographies by Ruth Webb or John Lehmann – both of which have good indexes, chronologies, short bibliographies, and are full of good pictures too!

**Liberties Press:** *The 100 best gardens in Ireland*, by Shirley Lanigan (2012, 287 pp, €25). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, April 2012.

. . . the book would have been improved with an index.

**Lilliput Press:** *Terror in Ireland*, ed. by David Fitzpatrick (2012, 256 pp, €15). Rev. in *Books Ireland*, May 2012.

Each [paper in the collection] trails its own source notes, but there is no single list of sources or – strangely – index.

**Longmans, Green:** *A treatise on photography*, by W. de Wiveleslie Abney (3rd ed., 1878, 326 pp). Rev. by *The Journal of Science, and Annals of Biology, Astronomy, Geology, Industrial Arts, Manufactures and Technology*, 15, 1878, pp. 269–271.

We most cordially recommend Capt. Abney's book to our readers. We regret to say that the Index to this important work is so meagre as to be almost useless. [Philip Jackson, who submitted this item, writes: 'Here is a comment a little older than some of your usual fare, but otherwise not much different.']

**Penguin:** *Rebels: voices from the Easter rising*, by Fearghal McGarry (2011, 386 pp, £20). Rev. by Lucille Redmond, *Books Ireland*, February 2012.

McGarry has collected hundreds of brief stories told in the words of those who fought. . . . McGarry mined the Bureau of Military History for these statements, which he has organised, maddeningly without any index, into a series of ten chapters . . .

**Scala:** *Beauty, sex and power*, by Brett Dolman (2012, 128 pp, £16.95). Rev. by Brian Sewell, *Evening Standard*, 19 April 2012.

When this exhibition [at Hampton Court Palace] was announced late last year I thought it a proper and ingenious use of the history

of art . . . It simply does not live up to being dubbed *The Wild, the Beautiful and the Damned*, and to promise so much but deliver so little is a crushing disappointment for the visitor . . . For facts – but only a few – we must pay £16.95 for the accompanying paperback that is neither a proper work of reference (it has no index) nor even an attempt at a proper catalogue. I doubt if any study of the Stuarts has ever been so tastelessly and vulgarly presented . . . Why did its scribblers not follow the impeccable example of exhibition catalogues issued by the Queen’s Gallery, Buck House?

**Union Books:** *Moby-Duck: the true story of 28,800 bath toys lost at sea*, by Donovan Hohn (2012, 416 pp, £20). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Guardian*, 30 March 2012.

It won’t be for everyone: it’s a baggy and structureless piece of work, and some will find the whimsy wearing. I liked it. At its best it is sublime, and if at its worst it’s pseudy, it is at least self-mockingly pseudy. Here’s something original and eccentric and multi-faceted that tells you a good many interesting things about the world – and then, not having an index, maximises your chance of forgetting them. That is, in a way, in keeping.

## Obiter dicta

**Birlinn,** *The importance of being awkward*, by Tam Dalyell (2011, 288 pp, £25). Rev. by Andy McSmith, *The Oldie*, November 2011.

Writing at the age of almost eighty, he has a clearer memory of events from the 1970s than of the 1990s, for which reason his memoirs sag towards the end. He also has an absurdly polite habit of name-checking everyone he has known whom he thinks deserves to be remembered. By my approximate count, over 600 of his contemporaries are listed in the index. There would be many more, but the index compiler left out pages 284–290, in which he names every member of the West Lothian Labour Party that he can remember. Thoughtful, but tough on the reader. [*Awkward indeed.*]

**British Library:** *The culture of correction in Renaissance Europe*, by Anthony Grafton (2011, 144 pp, £30). Rev. by James Binns, *Times Literary Supplement*, 16 March 2012.

It was therefore highly desirable for authors who wished their books to be accurate to be present at the press to check their proofs. At their best, some early printers – Johann Froben, Johannes Oporinus, Christopher Plantin – could offer the equivalent of a modern research institute. Grafton shows that learned authors might live with such publishers as their works went through the press, might themselves earn a living as press correctors, as John Foxe did for Oporinus in Basle, and that an erudite atmosphere prevailed, with Latin as a lingua franca, and even the young daughters of the printer helping out with scholarly tasks. At this level, the routine task of proof-correcting might gradually merge into correcting an author’s style, and even, in the case of classical writers, into textual criticism. Such an ambience produced some excellent indexes, and other systems of reference that are still with us today. (Modern writers still refer to Plato’s works using the page numbers and divisions of Stephanus’s edition of 1578, for example.)

**Hamish Hamilton:** *The old ways: a journey on foot*, by Robert Macfarlane (2012, 431 pp, £20). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Spectator*, 26 May 2012.

Macfarlane salts his prose with recondite vocabulary (a glossary, which contains a haphazard selection of them, is appended, along with a bizarrely idiosyncratic ‘Index of Selected Topics’) and well knows the evocative power of the bare list:

Pilgrim paths, green roads, drove roads, corpse roads, trods, leys, dykes, drongs, sarns, snickets [...] holloways, bostles, shutes, driftways, lichways, ridings, halterpaths, cartways, carneys, causeways, herepaths.

**Viking:** *Letters of Sylvia Townsend Warner*, ed. by William Maxwell (1982, 320 pp, £28.20).

To index the letters is pointless; everything is as interesting as everything else and it would be like indexing life itself. Better to think of her as she once described herself – Frau Noah leaning out of a window with a coffee cup in her hand admiring last night’s flood and seeing everything exactly as it is.

William Maxwell, *The outermost dream* (Graywolf Press, 1997)

**Virago:** *A natural woman: a memoir*, by Carole King (2012, 488 pp, £20). Rev. by Liz Thomson, *The Independent*, 20 April 2012.

Here’s a first: a rock memoir with footnotes and index. [*Not actually the first.*]

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).*

## Official . . .

Topics clearly indicated in chapter and section headings have not invariably been included in the index. Dates of birth, death, the grant of titles and appointment to important positions are given when known. If only one date for an office is given, the office was held for life; otherwise the date of departure from office is given. For offices not usually held for life, such as governorships and viceroalties, a terminal date is given even when the holder died in office.

Note to the index of Philip Pierson, *Philip of Spain*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1975 (a title in the ‘Men in office’ series).