

found in that entry available by other means, namely subject indexing. The outstanding feature of this index is its subject analysis and the exhaustive subject headings which that analysis has generated.

Although there is no entry for John Howard himself, there is an extensive entry for 'Howard Government' which is divided into a general entry containing references to cabinet members etc (including an entry for 'JH as prime minister, 231-646!'), followed by an entry titled 'Howard Government policies'. There is also an entry for 'Howard family', as well as all the individual members of the Howard family. And there are entries titled 'personal and political relationships' and 'personal and political relationships (Howard's)'. The latter contains much information that would normally be found under the heading for the protagonist (had there been one).

Several of the subject headings deserve specific mention as they are particularly well thought out. The entry for the Australian Labor Party is especially good: first there is a general heading which includes references to State branches, then headings for periods in opposition, differ-

entiated by who was leader in a given year, then entries for ALP leadership, then ALP policies. The entry for Liberal Party is equally extensive, being divided into a general entry and one titled 'Liberal Party leadership', and complemented by an extensive entry on the Coalition in opposition titled 'Opposition, Coalition in', which is then subdivided by period. Other good, extensive entries include 'elections', 'media', interesting entries for 'Sydney' and 'Melbourne', a very large entry on the 'United States', which itself says much about the nature of the Howard government, and an interesting entry on symbolism.

The index takes up 38 pages of the 688-page book, a proportion of index pages to pages of indexable text of 5.5 per cent. Main treatments of topics are in bold, and photographs are indicated by plate numbers, which are placed at the end of references to text. An extensive network of cross-references anticipates readers' queries well.

This award makes Alan a three-times winner of the medal, a distinction he now shares with Max McMaster. We also congratulate HarperCollins as the publisher of this book.

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## 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

**Alfaguara:** *Cartas* (Tomo IV: 1969–1976), by Julio Cortázar (2013, 632 pp, \$20). Rev. by Martin Schifino, *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 October 2013.

... there are reasons to be grateful: the collection [of letters] has nearly doubled in size, and the index in each volume is impeccable. But a scholarly introduction to each of them would be desirable, and a chronology quite helpful. Cortázar has long been a writer who inspires devotion; editors should take note that his readers always want to know more.

**Canongate:** *The novel cure: an A to Z of literary remedies*, by Susan Elderkin and Ella Berthoud (2013, 464 pp, £17.99). Rev. by Gavin Francis, *The Guardian*, 21 September 2013.

Opening almost randomly in the 'Ls, I find 'left out, feeling' (Carson McCullers's *The Member of the Wedding*), 'libido, loss of' (Mario Vargas Llosa's *In Praise of the Stepmother*), 'long-winded, being' (Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*) and 'love, unrequited' (four novels: Turgenev's *First Love*, Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*, Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and Ann Patchett's *Bel Canto*). One of the pleasures of this entertaining book is the way it drives you to agree or disagree with the authors' choices. Under

'overwhelmed, by the number of books in your house' where is Bohumil Hrabal's *Too Loud a Solitude*? Or for 'drugs, doing too many' what about William Burroughs's *Junky*? But even as you're spluttering at the omissions, you'll find yourself nodding with self-satisfied pleasure that one of your favourites has been singled out for its healing properties.

Each ailment is followed by a short precis, occasionally written as a parody of the book recommended. Search out those ailments you have painful experience of (constipation perhaps? *Shantaram*), or just flick through until something catches your eye (itchy teeth? Saul Bellow's *Henderson the Rain King*). An index of authors lets you seek out your darlings and cross-reference them with the ailments they've been prescribed for. The result is more bibliophilia than bibliotherapy; an exuberant pageant of literary fiction and a celebration of the possibilities of the novel.

**Canterbury Press:** *Ancient & modern: hymns and songs for refreshing worship*, ed. by Tim Ruffer et al (2013, 1782 pp, £30). Rev. by Ian Sharp, *Church Music Quarterly*, September 2013.

The contents follow a thematic framework, starting with 'Morning' and 'Evening' and going through to sections on 'Creation and the Environment', 'Justice and Peace' and 'National and Remembrance'. This ordering of material makes the book easy to use, whether in formal or informal contexts. The indexes will be of great help to those planning worship. A small sample taken from the Thematic Index illustrates the breadth of material: 'Music and song', 'Nation and society', 'Neighbour', 'New Year' and 'Nurture'. Equally valuable is the Biblical Index and the 'List of items suitable for children and all-age worship'.

**Century:** *Rod: the autobiography*, by Rod Stewart (2012, 384 pp, £20). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Age*, 9 November 2012.

This book does clatter off to a good start. It also has a comprehensive index: 'Lumley, Joanna 177–9'; 'nuclear weapons 28, 29'; 'oral sex, Rod advised against 58; untrue stories of 232' and so on. [*Index by SI member Christopher Phipps.*]

**Edinburgh Bibliographical Society and K. A. Manley:** *Books, borrowers, and shareholders: Scottish circulating and subscription libraries before 1825*, by K. A. Manley (2012, 240 pp, £35). Rev. by Diana Dixon, *CILIP Update*, December 2013.

There are two indexes: one for the survey and one for the listing. Those unfamiliar with older Scottish county listings will find the location index invaluable.

**Facet:** *Collection development in the digital age*, ed. by M. Fieldhouse and A. Marshall (2012, 233 pp, £49.95). Rev. by Margaret I. Katny, *CILIP Update*, September 2013.

The book is supported by wide ranging and relevant bibliographies and an excellent index.

**Fourth Estate:** *Eat: the little book of fast food*, by Nigel Slater (2013, 464 pp, £26). Rev. by Elfreda Pownall, *The Spectator*, 23 November 2013.

The book is very easy to use. In the front is a list of recipes, organised by main ingredient; in the back a good index. [*Another index by SI member Christopher Phipps.*]

**Reaktion:** *Geranium*, by Kasia Boddy (2013, 224 pp, £16). Rev. by Celia Fisher, *Hortus*, Summer 2013.

For easy reference to points of greatest interest there is a comprehensive index.

**Simon & Schuster:** *Making it happen: Fred Goodwin, RBS and the men who blew up the British economy*, by Iain Martin (2013, 353 pp, £20). Rev. by Patrick Hosking, *The Times*, 21 September 2013.

The 'Goodwin' entry in the detailed index is a character assassination in miniature.

## Indexes censured

**Capre:** *Birds and people*, by Mark Cocker and David Tipling (2013, 592 pp, £40). Rev. by Caspar Henderson, *Literary Review*, September 2013.

With such abundant riches on display, it may seem churlish to find any fault with this book. One weakness, however, is the index, which does not list a number of the bird species described in the text.

Rev. by Jeremy Mynott, *Times Literary Supplement*, 4 October 2013.

The bibliography is excellent and very full (the omission of Aristotle is a slip that can easily be corrected), but the other reference items at the end of the volume are a little more patchy. The short Glossary in Appendix 1 was perhaps not strictly necessary since most technical terms are explained on first appearance. The Biographical Details in Appendix 2 could usefully have been fuller, however: the notes are interesting and well-turned, but if Aelian, John Ray and H. D. Thoreau qualify, then what about E. A. Armstrong, J. J. Audubon and Alexander Wilson? The index, too, is spare in its coverage of general topics for those who might want to follow through a theme such as domestication, costume/

adornment, flight, shooting, song or music (none of which appear as headwords). These are of course tiny blemishes when measured against the qualities of the book as a whole, but one wishes the publisher could have done more to ensure that the authors' prodigious labours were given the finishing touches they deserve.

**Carcanet:** *There and then: Personal terms 6*, by Frederic Raphael (2013, 320 pp, £18.95). Rev. by Sarah Curtis, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 September 2013.

Many readers will be confused by his barbed anecdotes about people who are named but not identified. (There are few notes and only a rudimentary index.)

**Chandos Publishing:** *Indexing: from thesauri to the semantic web*, by Peter de Keyser (2012, 272 pp, £52.50). Rev. by Keith Wilson, *CILIP Update*, October 2013.

Setting out to provide 'a broad and comprehensible introduction to indexing', the author focuses on collection and information resource access for library information and knowledge professionals.... Each chapter has a rich abstract and keywords, but the main index is unexpectedly and disappointingly thin. [*Physician, heal thyself!*]

**Constable:** *What fresh lunacy is this? The authorized biography of Oliver Reed*, by Robert Sellers (2013, 512 pp, £20). Rev. by Gabriel Byrne, *Irish Times*, 3 August 2013.

At 500 pages it is far too long and akin to being trapped with the pub bore. One can take only so many tales of excess and dissipation – a diligent editor might have addressed this as well as the inadequate index.

**Coranto Press:** *Blum and Taff: a tale of two editors*, by Dennis Griffiths (2013, 508 pp, £25). Rev. by Piers Brendon, *The Oldie*, November 2013.

... it is littered with inaccuracies, garbled quotations, scrambled syntax, misspelt names. The references are inadequate and the index is hopeless.

**Lilliput Press:** *The last knight: a tribute to Desmond Fitzgerald, 29th Knight of Glin*, by Robert O'Byrne (2013, 224 pp, £15). Rev. by Hugh Rathcavan, *The Spectator*, 30 November 2013.

In fact there is a photograph in this book of the Knight and I dancing a jig to the melodious tin-whistle music of Paddy Maloney. But in the caption I am described as someone else, albeit a cousin. This has prejudiced my view of the factual accuracy of this book, which has an irritatingly bad index. [*The reviewer's irritatingly bad grammar ('a photograph of I?') prejudices my view of his review.*]

**Mayfield Books:** *The longcase clock reference book*, by John Robey (2 vols, £120). Rev. by Mike Flannery, *Horological Journal*, October 2013.

This book should be described as a masterpiece. It will be the essential reference book for anyone who is interested in longcase clocks. I have but one tiny point, which should not detract from the whole. I would have hoped for a larger and more detailed index. The book's title is *The Longcase Clock Reference Book* and, in my opinion, a reference book stands or fails on two points.

Firstly, the book must contain significant reference material. In this case the books are packed full of horological reference material, of that there is little doubt.

Secondly, the reference material must be easily extracted from inside the body of the work and while the bibliography, picture index and general index run to just under twenty pages, I feel that a more detailed index would have been helpful to those who would seek to use the books as reference works.

**Serpent's Tail:** *Sounds like London: 100 years of Black music in the capital* by Lloyd Bradley (2013, 432 pp, £12.99). Rev. by Margaret Busby, *The Independent*, 21 September 2013.

A slight hindrance is the strangely selective index – for instance, despite a three-page discussion about Labrinth's signing to Syco Music, Simon Cowell gets no entry.

## Indexes omitted

**Clerkenwell Press:** *1913: the year before the storm*, by Florian Illies, tr. by Shaun Whiteside and Jamie Lee Searle (2013, 304 pp, £14.99). Rev. by Eileen Battersby, *Irish Times*, 20 July 2013.

... an index would have added to the fun.

**New Holland Publishers:** *Birds: coping with an obsession*, by Derek Moore (2013, 272 pp, £14.99). Rev. by David Hosking, *Birdwatch*, December 2013.

Derek's skills as a photographer have improved greatly since he retired, and it would have been nice to see more of his pictures in the book. An index would also have been a great help for those looking for a quick reference, or to see what he's said about them!

**O'Brien Press:** *Arkle – The Legend of 'Himself'*, by Anne Holland (2013, 224 pp, £16.99). Rev. by Steve Dennis, *Racing Post*, 27 November 2013.

The book now resembles a five-furlong sprinter asked to tackle a mile and a half. There is nothing left in the locker but the 'winning post' of p. 206 must be reached somehow, so Holland struggles on through chapters of increasing irrelevance leading to a conclusion seemingly shorn of any editorial input and unhelpfully unindexed.

**Penguin:** *Selected poems*, by Tony Harrison (2013, 288 pp, £9.99). Rev. by Nicholas Lezard, *The Guardian*, 16 March 2013.

Harrison's *Collected Poems* comes in at 474 pages; this is 200 fewer. A *Collected Works*, on the other hand, would run to many volumes, and none of his stage or film verse is included here. Nor is an index, either of poems or first lines, which seems a trifle shabby.

**School Library Association:** *A time and a place: local studies and the school library*, by Steve Hird (2013, 50 pp, £7.50). Rev. by Lucy Gildersleeves, *CILIP Update*, December 2013.

A significant limitation is the lack of index – a problem common to the SLA Guidelines series.

**Simon & Schuster:** *Salinger*, by David Shields and Shane Salerno (2013, 698 p, \$37.50/£25). Rev. by Sam Leith, *The Guardian*, 21 September 2013.

This [biography of J. D. Salinger] is a vast, silly, boastful, prurient, intellectually incoherent and basically philistine volume – yet about which, unfortunately, it is impossible to say 'it is completely worthless'. Gosh, what a frustrating hodgepodge it is .... There's no index. There are scant descriptions of who these speakers are (and

you have to flick to the back to find them), and you are often left dangling as to why we're hearing from them at all.

Rev. in *The Economist*, 28 September 2013.

Arranged like an oral history (awkwardly without an index), *Salinger* draws on some previously inaccessible letters and interviews with more than 200 people. Those seeking serious scholarship will be disappointed. This is an inelegant, prurient smorgasbord of insight and anecdotes from historians, friends and random talking heads.

Rev. by James Campbell, *Times Literary Supplement*, 20 and 27 December 2013.

Testimony from almost 300 contributors is made use of, and just about anyone who made contact with Salinger is mentioned in the book's 700 pages, yet the publishers see no need for an index. [*Sounds like the sort of book that positively cries out for an index.*]

**University of Chichester Press:** *William Hayley (1745–1820). Poet, biographer, and libertarian: A reassessment* (2013, 208 pp, £16); *William Hayley (1745–1820). England's lost laureate: Selected poetry* (2013, 16 December 2013, 93 pp, £8). Rev. by Min Wild, *Times Literary Supplement*, 11 October 2013.

Readers may leave these volumes grieving for two missed opportunities. One concerns production values, which are poor in both, though *Selected Poetry* is atrocious. Some words are unreadable or comic ('leep' for 'sleep'; 'whore' for 'whose'), chunks of text in both are repeated, lines are compacted, and copy-editors snored throughout. Illustrations are varied in both, and many please; others are fuzzy through low resolution. The collection has no index, so that both general reader and scholar are badly served. No writer deserves this, and certainly not Hayley, himself a careful, bountiful presenter of his own and others' work.

## Obiter dicta

**Biteback Publishing:** *Biteback dictionary of humorous literary quotations*, ed. by Fred Metcalf (2013, 288 pp, £9.99). Rev. by J. C., 'N. B.', *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 November 2013.

Of the *Biteback Dictionary of Humorous Literary Quotations* we ask only two things: that it be humorous, and that we know where the jokes are coming from. It gets off to a bad start: 'Delve here and discover T. S. Eliot's advice on becoming a great writer (it's a bit anal)'. We delved to E for Eliot, but found only E-books and some dusty Epigrams. We delved to the index, to find that the Dictionary doesn't have one. Under Poets and Poetry, we found something that might be the quote in question: 'The most important thing for poets to do is to write as little as possible'. This is attributed to 'T. S. Eliot, American poet and critic', but where did he say it? When? Was he perhaps, if he said this or something like it, being not anal, but subtle? We don't know. More important, Fred Metcalf, editor of the *Biteback Dictionary of Humorous Quotations*, doesn't know either. Did anal old Eliot say it? Let's have a laugh, and imagine he did.

Mr Metcalf thanks the 'elite team of literary notables at Biteback Publishing' and advises us – with characteristic humour – 'not to mess with any of them. I speak from bitter personal experience'. We too speak from bitter experience: a dictionary of quotations, humorous or not, isn't worth an anal quip without an index and sources. Here comes the American poet and critic again: 'To become a great writer, whatever you do, avoid piles.' Piles! It's too hilarious for words. You want to know where he said it, or

what he might have meant? Are you trying to be funny? Critics are always good for a laugh – the type of critics about whom Eugene O'Neill said, or might have said, 'I love every bone in their heads.' The following exchange raised that rare thing, a smile:

Artist: What's your opinion of my painting?

Critic: It's worthless.

Artist: I know, but I'd like to hear it anyway.

Does any member of the elite team know where that came from? Not Fred, who is also editor of the *Biteback Dictionary of Humorous Political Quotations* and of *Humorous Sporting Quotations*. He proves his fitness for the literary job by including a special section on Jane Austen's humour. Brace yourself: 'Indulge your imagination in every possible flight' (*Pride and Prejudice*).

**Faber:** *The time by the sea: Aldeburgh 1955–58*, by Ronald Blythe (2013, 256 pp, £15.99). Rev. by Peter J. Conradi, *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 August 2013.

[Blythe] spotted E. M. Forster, elderly and in a tweed overcoat and flat cap, passing him by in the wintry Aldeburgh street, who soon thrust a page from a pocketbook under his cottage door, reading: 'If you are free today and can come for a drink, we shall be very pleased to see you. Yours sincerely, E. M. Forster.' Blythe duly appeared and was both too surprised and shy to inquire how Forster knew of his existence. But he helped with the index to Forster's enthralling 'domestic biography' of Marianne Thornton, the great-aunt whose £5,000 bequest made Forster financially independent and able to pursue a literary life.

As a librarian, Blythe knew about indexes. And as an apprentice writer, he wanted to learn about independence ....

[See also *The Indexer* 31(4), December 2013, for another mention of this incident under 'Obiter dicta', where the review should have been identified as appearing in *The Independent*, 8 June 2013. Incidentally Hazel Bell wrote about the index in question, quoting some sample entries, in *The Indexer*, 24(2), October 2004). She commented: 'Marianne Thornton: a domestic biography 1797–1887 by E. M. Forster, published by Edward Arnold in 1956, is a rare example of an indexer's intruding his person into the index. From incontrovertible internal evidence, this index is the work of Forster himself, and it has the charm of all other productions from his pen.']

### Fatal flaw

A distinguished scientist once told me that in his opinion a book without an index was a bad book, whatever its contents.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, quoted in *Vaughan Williams on music*, ed. by David Manning (Oxford University Press, 2008)

[A pity we don't know the name of the scientist. The source of the quotation is An Index of English Songs contributed to the Journal of the Folk Song Society 1899-1931 and its Continuation the Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society to 1950, ed. by Margaret Dean-Smith (*English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 1951).]

### Cross reference?

The 'ridiculous pronouncements' in Tiernan MacNamara's borrowed book of moral theology (Letters, 23 November) were quite enlightened compared with the one I studied from 60 years ago. There was only one reference in its index to the fairer sex: 'women – cf. SIN, occasions of'.

Basil Loftus, Braeval, Helmsdale, Sutherland, letter in *The Tablet*, 30 November 2013

[Does anyone today use 'cf.' in cross-references, and was it ever a common practice?]

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).

## Book review

**Shady characters: ampersands, interrobangs and other typographical curiosities.** Keith Houston. London: Particular Books, 2013. 340 pp. ISBN 978-1-846-14647-3 (hbk) £16.99

This is a delightful book: attractively produced, enlivened with quiet humour and often fascinating. If you received it as a Christmas present, you should feel flattered that someone recognized and indulged the breadth of your literary interests – but just how relevant is it to indexing? While there's no doubt that sorting diacritics, for example, causes indexers many headaches, or that ligatures treacherously undermine our trust in PDF searches, punctuation in the text is an indexing cold potato. Indeed, recent debate in the UK has focused on tangential issues, like whether to preserve the inverted commas authors use to distinguish personal and unofficial coinages. Within indexes themselves, the key punctuation requirements seem to be understanding how hyphens affect sort order and remembering to separate page ranges with

en-dashes. Even the superficially index-related manicule (☞, the pointing hand or mutton fist) proves not really to be relevant to indexing.

It is almost a decade since the unashamed zero-tolerance approach of *Eats, shoots and leaves* delivered a surprise bestseller for Lynne Truss, and this year *Shady characters* is accompanied by David Marsh's down-to-earth grammatical guide, *For who the bell tolls*. Seemingly it's hard to fail when advising people on how to write, but there's much less appetite among adults for being taught how to read critically, which is sad because one would hope that, at any one time, more people would be reading than writing (aside from any prominence that the missing reading guides might have given to indexing). Punctuation though occupies hotly disputed ground between grammar and typography, each of which can arouse strong passions, and so can be relied on to deliver entertainingly opinionated prose.

In ten chapters, Houston delves into the histories of 11 separate