anyone in book history and is a welcome addition to the Publishing Pathways series.

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Indexing is indeed “an anonymous profession.” After reading the brief biographies of 65 individual practitioners, the makers of indexes, from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, I was convinced that there is something rather extraordinary about the skill and dedication that these people brought to the pursuit of the ideal index. The book is a wonderful paean to the profession, which raises questions about the longstanding publishing tradition of not naming the person who compiled the index. Hazel Bell appears eminently qualified to write a history of index-makers, having compiled more than 700 indexes to books and journals, not to mention her decades of service to the Society of Indexers and its journal, *The Indexer*, so one might assume that she would have a lot to say about the origins and early development of indexing. Surprisingly, the opening chapter is rather thin and Bell quotes extensively from others who have written about the subject. In fact, some readers may get the impression that Bell is uncomfortable with her role as author. Perhaps this is exactly the point of the book, that indexers are humble, forever at the service of the author and text, and always working behind the scenes without acknowledgment.

The book will appeal to anyone who has ever been curious to know why the names of indexers are rarely known. According to Bell, much has been written of the skills and qualifications required for indexing but surprisingly little about the personal qualities of the indexer. She clearly aims to address that oversight by introducing readers to the fascinating lives of indexers through the past six centuries. While the chronologically arranged section – suitably titled “Lone Workers” – provides an excellent overview of the many ways that indexers have come to indexing as a career and how “the personality of the indexer is never far behind the index,” it also reads like a biographical dictionary and is perhaps best appreciated a few biographies at a time.
Whatever misgivings readers may have about the bald introduction, there can be absolutely no doubt that Bell has done a great service to her profession by bringing us face to face with the greatest pioneers in the field. Readers will naturally favour certain personalities over others, but I suspect that the entries on Samuel Pepys (1633–1703) and Lewis Carroll (1832–1898) will be especially popular. (Bell identifies the authors of these entries as P.E.G. and A.A.I.) Pepys was clearly a most exceptional indexer, endowed with all the mental prowess and physical stamina to work into the wee hours on his “Alphabet,” which he perfected to his great satisfaction. His energy must have been tremendous, but his life as an indexer is only briefly chronicled here, so curious readers may wish to pick up the thread in his famous *Diary*. While the entries are masterpieces of compression, their succinctness can also be frustrating, especially when one wants to know more about the sheer brilliance of the personality behind the name.

Carroll’s entry is fleshed out in greater detail, and we learn that he had a lifelong interest in indexing. When Carroll was only 13 years old he indexed *The Rectory Magazine*, a manuscript compilation to which the entire family was supposed to contribute. His index included many fascinating entries:

- A tale without a name (W.S.) 3,15
- General, Things in (Ed.) 25
- Name, A tale without a (W.S.) 3,15
- Rubbish, Reasonings on (Ed.) 1
- Things in General (Ed.) 25
- Twaddle on Telescopes (Ed.) 85

With so many intellectual interests it is perhaps surprising that Carroll devoted so much time to indexing, but it was clearly a labour of love. When his personal correspondence became so voluminous, he developed a sophisticated indexing system for keeping track of names, dates, and subject matters. Carroll’s orderly mind was an obvious advantage to his indexing work, but he also recognized that indexes could be playful. Rarely do we see novels published with indexes, but that is precisely the case with two of Carroll’s novels, *Sylvie and Bruno* (1889) and *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893). He filled the indexes with comical entries, which remind us that indexing is a marvelous subject with richness and variety.

Bell’s final section on the Society of Indexers and its activities will help to promote interest in this field, though I wish that she had captured some of the important implications of computer-generated indexes. The book’s primary and very real purpose is to take account
of indexers who worked wholly on the printed word, so we must turn elsewhere for an account of whether indexers will continue to play a role in the emerging electronic universe. This is a matter of considerable concern to the future of the profession, but perhaps Bell feels that the golden age of indexing has long passed. One wishes the book the widest possible audience, though I suspect that many readers will wish to know more about the indexers and their work, but to attempt to present so many lives in such a slim volume encourages a certain partiality and superficiality. What there is for the interested reader is a treasure trove of information about indexers and their habits that is not easily found elsewhere.

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There are many ways to tell the story of the emergence of the idea of modern literature and these days, bolstered by a self-reflexive interest in the shaping influence of the disciplinary formations within which our work is inscribed, we tell them a lot. The complex history of the idea of literature has become a central aspect of our critical debates. Many critics have traced the rise of literature as an aesthetic category to the defeat of a more politically engaged version of literature in the years after the French Revolution. Others link it to the emergence of the broader idea of culture as a realm free from acquisitive desires in an age consumed with getting and spending. Mark Rose has famously traced the rise of Romantic ideas of literary genius back to strategic positions adopted in the copyright trials of the mid-eighteenth century. Still others have focussed on the ways that modern literature evolved as a supplement enabling the emergence of the category of fact-based inquiries that became known as science. What is striking about all of these models is the extent to which they situate the rise of modern literature in a relational history with the various fields with which its modern definition supposedly had nothing in common – politics, commerce, and science.

Mary Poovey’s *Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain* offers a challenging and