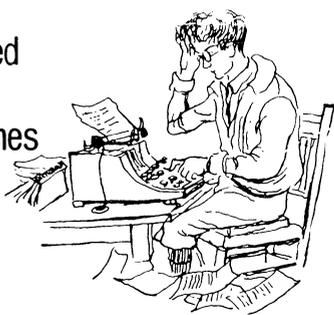


THE SOURCE

edited
and compiled
by
David J. Jones



Embarras de richesse

The latest efforts of two of the world's stalwart band of abbreviation collectors were published in the United Kingdom during 1981.

Their labours in the bottomless pit of acronyms and abbreviations bring to mind the words 'Alas! poor duke, the task he undertakes/Is numbering sands and drinking oceans dry', for though mighty their labours are, there is not, nor will there ever be a single source for all the acronyms and abbreviations which one is likely to encounter.

Libraries will always need a range of abbreviations dictionaries, some attempting to cover particular subjects or countries in depth, others giving superficial but still useful coverage of all fields.

F. A. Buttress' *World guide to abbreviations of organizations*, 6th edition (London: Leonard Hill, 1981) is clearly in the first category, containing 27,500 entries for societies, government departments, universities, research and other institutes.

Buttress has come a long way since his fifth edition (1974) which contained 18,000 entries. His great strength has always been, and I am pleased to say still is, in his coverage not just of organisations from English-speaking countries but in the rest of the world.

In this respect he scores consistently over Gale's *Acronyms, initialisms and abbreviations dictionary*, clearly a work attempting generalist coverage despite its monumental proportions.

Sampling Buttress for some home-grown products his score is only average. He has a 'u' in Australian Labor Party (despite the fact that Labor has been non-U for many years), lists CBCS but not ABS, doesn't list JLA, lists CSIRO but not CILES.

Less parochially, he doesn't list ABACUS or CHOGM either. So there are a few for the seventh edition. Such is the Augean task of the abbreviations lexicographer.

Eric Pugh's *Dictionary of acronyms and abbreviations* was first published in 1968, with a second, expanded, edition in 1970.

His *Second dictionary* and *Third dictionary* (which incidentally did not cumulate) appeared in 1974 and 1976 respectively. 1981 saw the publication of *Pugh's dictionary of acronyms and abbreviations*, a cumulation of earlier editions with additional entries (London: Bingley, 1981).

The promise of the subtitle, 'Abbreviations in management, technology and information science', is more than borne out by the work itself, although the subject coverage is much wider than those three disciplines.

Pugh doesn't list CBCS, let alone ABS, or JLA (although the National Library of Australia is listed under ANL), or CHOGM or ABACUS. He does list CSIRO and CILES, however.

Australian producers of dictionaries of acronyms and abbreviations can relax: they are still a necessary evil.

Both Buttress and Pugh provide excellent coverage of aspects of the extensive field of shortened forms around the world.

So of course do Ralph de Sola and Ellen T. Crowley in the other two of the 'Big Four' of international acronyms dictionaries.

Sadly none is dispensable. All are complementary. None is a substitute for a specialist abbreviations dictionary if one has particular subject or regional interests. All are pretty expensive, and destined for reference shelves in larger libraries and almost certainly not home reference shelves.

F.A. Buttress' *World guide to abbreviations of organizations*, 6th edition, published in London by Leonard Hill in 1981, costs \$130.00 from the local agent, ANZ Book Co. (ISBN 0 249 44159 4).

Pugh's *dictionary of acronyms and abbreviations*, published in London by Bingley in 1981, costs £38.00. (ISBN 0 85157 292 8).

For those who need an awesome listing of abbreviations dictionaries, particularly useful, it is hoped, for those seeking a work on a particular subject or area, Gale has recently published Annie M. Brewer's *Abbreviations, acronyms, ciphers and signs* which consists of reproductions of the LC catalogue cards for around 900 works.

Included are dictionaries of abbreviations, books on symbols in art and architecture, 'mathematical tomes, glossaries and similar works'.

Items are included if their titles contain any one of the four words abbreviation, acronym, cipher or sign, or if the LC tracings abbreviations, acronyms, ciphers or signs and symbols are shown.

Items are arranged by LC classification, and access to the material for those unfamiliar with LC is by the contents list or by the 'key word index'.

The latter in fact indexes the subject headings of the items listed, not, regrettably, the titles. So, for example, there is no entry under Australia, or Abbreviations, Australian.

There is no author or compiler index, which is a pity if you are trying to discover quickly the publishing history of, for the sake of argument, Buttress or Pugh.

Nor are entries annotated beyond the bare bones of the cataloguing data. This is a pity, as it limits the work's usefulness as a selection tool. As it is, Brewer's work is certainly a monument to the assiduity of hundreds of compilers around the world, and will be useful to throw some light, if not enough, on their labours.

Annie M. Brewer's *Abbreviations, acronyms, ciphers and signs* was published by Gale Research in 1981 and costs US\$48.00. (ISBN 0 8103 0529 1).

User studies in PNG

Two interesting studies of the use made of libraries in Papua New Guinea are reported briefly in the July 1981 issue of *Tok tok bilong haus buk*, the journal of the PNG Library Association.

In the first study Eric Flower conducted an informal survey of the reading habits of adult public library users, concluding that their taste was eclectic, though certainly restrained by the limited bookstocks available.

The other survey reported, also by Eric Flower, was of users of Port Moresby public libraries. Other articles in this issue deal with reader education, education for librarianship, the need for reading rooms and

other news of developments in PNG. The September issue is even bigger (62 pages), highlighting library services to the disabled.

Tok tok bilong haus buk is published five times per year and costs K10.00 for overseas institutions overseas (K8.00 to individuals). You may also be eligible for membership of the PNGLA.

Ross Shimmon is Publications Manager and you can write to him c/o Library Studies, Administrative College, PO Box 6177, Boroko, Papua New Guinea. (ISSN 0310-463X)

Kiwi novels

What constitutes a New Zealand novel is only a little less difficult to answer than 'How long is a piece of string?', but a rational definition has been reached by James Burns in his *New Zealand novels and novelists 1861-1979: an annotated bibliography*.

So he includes, as well as those domiciled at home, New Zealand novelists resident abroad (hence Ruth Park's later work), visitors to New Zealand (hence Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*) and works set in and around New Zealand (hence Jules Verne's *Deux ans de vacances*). It's all sensibly explained in his introduction. The bibliography covers over a thousand novels, arranged chronologically by date of first publication.

Annotations are very brief (they reminded me of crossword puzzle clues, but were to me rather more enlightening) and the imprint and pagination is given for each novel. There are author and title indexes, and a brief list of references.

James Burns' *New Zealand novels and novelists* was published early in 1981 by Heinemann in Auckland. It costs \$14.95. (ISBN 0 86863 372 0).

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