

An Annotated Bibliography
of
Diaries Printed in English

by

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Third Edition
Revised and Enlarged

Volume I

Introduction, Index and Appendices



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INTRODUCTION

It is now five years since the appearance of the first edition of this work in its original conception as a loose-leafed publication which would be subject to annual amendment. Unfortunately it soon became apparent that this plan was hopelessly optimistic and that the number of amendments would quickly reduce the bibliography to chaos: the plan has therefore been abandoned. A second edition was issued in 1997 but only on CD-ROM and has never been printed. Practicalities notwithstanding, the ambition of the book remains unchanged, if probably unrealisable: to list every diary that has ever been printed in the English language. The degree to which achievement falls short of ambition is discussed in more detail later in this introduction but there are now listed approximately ten thousand diarists, of whom three quarters are either fully annotated or have at least the titles of their diaries appended, most of them with date and place of publication, and it is possible to speculate that there are no more than two or three thousand published diarists yet to be found. The number of publications is, of course much larger than the number of diarists and increases by some hundreds every year.

I do not intend to discuss the motives of diary writers, an unprofitable subject on which, as can be seen from the section dealing with anthologies collections and studies, many better qualified than I have aired their opinions; nor will I say anything about the pleasures of reading them. This is a utilitarian publication which seeks only to be useful in a very narrow field, but a field which contains not only books of enormous value to specialists in many disciplines, but which can also be sources of pleasure and instruction for anyone. It is, moreover, characteristic of diaries that their content and value is often far from obvious and therefore easily overlooked; neither are library catalogues always as helpfully revealing as they could be.

In deciding what qualifies as a diary, I have taken the easy route of accepting the claims of authors and editors and have included almost anything that has been called or claimed to be a diary or based upon a diary, although I have occasionally noted that the claim appears to be unjustified; only very few, mainly fictional titles are included in the short list of misleading titles. The distinction between diaries and journals has not been made; it is usual nowadays to regard the terms as interchangeable and although it is not difficult to make a case for differentiating them it is not likely to be helpful to discuss it here: I hope that readers who need to do so will be able to discern from the annotations the broad character of the record under discussion. The grounds for this catholicity are straightforward: it seems to me that the researcher should be allowed to decide for himself the limits of what he is prepared to accept, rather than deny him the opportunity of discovering a source which would have been of value. This is not to imply that the bibliography is purely a tool for professional research, indeed it is hoped, and purchasers of the first edition would seem to bear this out, that there is much to be gained by the general reader.

The bedrock upon which this bibliography is founded is the body of work compiled by William Matthews¹ and I here record my grateful thanks to the University of California Press for their permission to quote his annotations in those many instances where the diaries themselves have not yet been re-examined. With the probable exception of some diaries remaining undetected in his books on autobiographies almost the whole of Matthews bibliographical work on diaries is present here either revised or repeated. Chief among other sources has been the very helpful catalogue of James Cummings' unique private library of diaries which he has generously allowed me to draw upon; the library itself provided some of the basis for Laura Arksey, Nancy Pries and Marcia Reed's magisterial two volumes on American diaries which is the essential work in its field², and supersedes Matthews' book. Patricia Pate Havlice's bibliography³ was enormously helpful in compiling the first edition and this has been built on here to the extent that only a few hundred of her diarists

¹ *American Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of American Diaries Written Prior to the Year 1861* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1945; *British Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of British Diaries Written between 1442 and 1942* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950; *Canadian Diaries and Autobiographies* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950; *British Autobiographies: An Annotated Bibliography of British Autobiographies Published or Written before 1951* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1950. All these works are more fully described in the Bibliography of Bibliographies section.

² *American Diaries: An Annotated Bibliography of Published American Diaries and Journals* Volume 1: *Diaries Written from 1492 to 1844* Detroit, Gale Research Company, 1983 and Volume 2: *Diaries Written from 1845 to 1980* Detroit, Gale Research Company, 1987. This work is also more fully described in the Bibliography of Bibliographies section.

³ *And So to Bed: A Bibliography of Diaries Published in English* Metuchen, New Jersey, The Scarecrow Press, 1987 This work is also more fully described in the Bibliography of Bibliographies section.

are now attributed with nothing more than a name. A debt of gratitude is owed also to the hundreds of librarians, editors and booksellers whose indexes, catalogues and footnotes have contributed so much to the search both for specific information and clues to otherwise unknown diaries. By means more fully explained in the guide which follows this introduction, the bibliography is cross referenced throughout to the works of Matthews, Havlice and Arksey, to the extent that it effectively forms a dated index to them; this is now of only passing interest for the Matthews volumes but will be of use in directing the enquirer to the other two publications.

The alphabetical index of diarists, which omits anonymous diarists and refers only to mentions in the main bibliography, contains, where known, the dates of birth and death, and occasionally the occupation or location of the diarist. There has, however, been no attempt at any sort of subject or descriptive index: to have done so would have introduced great complexity at the risk of giving a false impression of completeness. Enquirers who need to make detailed searches of content are recommended to gain access to the CD-ROM edition which is, as explained in more detail below, better suited to the purpose.

The layout and reference conventions are set out in more comprehensive fashion in the guide but it is appropriate to mention here the CD-ROM edition of this book which is to be issued shortly after the publication of the printed version. Users of the earlier CD version have indicated, as is to be expected, that browsing the bibliography on a computer screen is an unrewarding occupation in comparison with reading the hard copy, but this is offset by the extraordinary power of the search facilities, which provide very fast retrieval not only of entries by name or date but by judicious selection of key words can be made to select, for example diaries mentioning farming or medicine, or those who have visited Rome or the Great Exhibition, or even occasions where the words 'Rome' and 'medicine' appear in proximity. The power of this search facility has been vitiated to some extent by the lack of detail in some annotations but it may be noticeable that others have become little more than lists of key words: although the intention is to make the entries readable for humans, as well as informative for machinery, there are limitations imposed by the process of composition of the diary descriptions. The most obvious of these is the pressure of time: often there will be less than half an hour available in which to distil the essence of a book and it is inevitable that the necessary skimming and sampling will lead to the missing of some key events and perhaps wrong emphasis of themes. It has nevertheless been found that often a later full reading has led to little change in the original note. I have usually tried to maintain objectivity, but where my own partialities and prejudice are apparent, I hope to be forgiven: it should soon become obvious to the reader where my bias is displayed. It should also be emphasised that length of summary is not to be taken as a guide to the quality or interest of a diary, for instance it seemed supererogatory to say anything at all about Samuel Pepys, whereas the diaries of Ennin, John Dee and Victor Klemperer are treated at some length because apart from their specialist appeals they have that elusive quality which transmutes the best diaries into literature. There is additionally a deliberate policy of giving more detailed attention to diarists at risk of being overlooked, at the expense of those better known and more accessible. It must be acknowledged, however, that there is much unevenness of treatment which, with other more minor inconsistencies, is the subject of continuing examination and gradual rectification.

It is now possible to claim that, with the notable exception of American Diaries, particularly from 1862 to 1980, for which Arksey, Pries and Reed must be the main source of reference, and despite the less than full representation of diaries from the English speaking Commonwealth, and less excusably those published by national and local record societies after 1945, the bibliography is reasonably comprehensive for titles published up to the early 1980's; material after that date requires more systematic research than has hitherto been possible. While it is not impossible that the original aim of an updateable publication may eventually be achieved, the present objective of research is to, at the very least, provide title, date and place of publication for those diarists who are now no more than a name; and to track down and include more recent publications.

It remains only to say that it is hoped that the fourth edition will appear some time in 2006, and once again to thank Diana, my wife, for her help and encouragement.

Christopher Handley
Whitley Bay, 2002