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- 4 Criteria for evaluating a bibliography. *RQ*, **11** (4), Summer 1972, 359-360.
- 5 Sheehy, E. P. *Guide to reference books*. 9th edn. American Library Association, 1976. Introductions to some of the sections, e.g. atlases.
- 6 *Subscription Books Committee manual*. American Library Association, 1969. The guidelines for reviewing atlases, bibliographies, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and children's reference books are conveniently reprinted in F. N. Cheney's *Fundamental reference sources*. American Library Association, 1971, 276-292.
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Walford, A. J. ed. *Walford's guide to reference material*. 4th ed. Vol. 1: *Science and technology*. London, Library Association, 1980. x, 697pp. ISBN 0 85365 611 8. £24.

The publication of guides to reference works has an illustrious history in the English speaking world of librarianship. The first major book of this type was edited by Alice Bertha Kroeger, a teacher of reference work at the Drexel Institute Library School in Philadelphia, and was published by the American Library Association in 1902. Following Kroeger's death, Isadore Gilbert Mudge, reference librarian at Columbia University, was asked to become the editor of the *Guide*, and she continued in this capacity for approximately 30 years. So widely known was her work in librarianship that, despite the fact that she has been succeeded by two subsequent editors, some of the older librarians in the United States continue to refer to the *Guide* as "Mudge", although she has had little to do with the work for 40 years.

In 1941, Constance Mabel Winchell became responsible for editing the supplement and eventually the seventh and eighth editions of the *Guide*. Again, resisting change, many librarians continue to refer to the work as "Winchell", even though it has been compiled by Eugene P. Sheehy of the reference department at Columbia University for many years.

As a companion to this well-established *Guide to reference books* John Minto in 1929 and 1931 published a similar work and supplement designed specifically for British librarians. Because these books were seriously dated, A. J. Walford's *Guide to reference material*, published in 1959, was well received internationally and was soon on the shelves of most of the major libraries of the English speaking world. In these institutions librarians have found it invaluable when building reference collections and when meeting the informational needs of library users.

It also has been used extensively by students of library science throughout the world.

Walford's *Guide*, in fact, was so popular when it first appeared in North American library schools in the early 1960s that many students there were divided between "Winchell" and "Walford" advocates, with the latter sometimes being adamant that the British work was so superior to the American one in the selection and the quality of its annotations that it should be used in lieu of Winchell.

Fortunately, that rivalry has subsided in America, at least, and the two guides are viewed, in general, as complementary rather than competitive. While Walford originally had fewer entries than the American work, it has grown into a three-volume set with many more titles described than in its companion published across the Atlantic.

In the compilation of the fourth edition of the first volume dealing with reference materials in science and technology, Walford has been assisted by Anthony P. Harvey of the British Museum Library and H. Dubba of the Universitätsbibliothek Hannover und Technische Informationsbibliothek. Because seven years have elapsed in these rapidly changing disciplines, this new edition will prove to be useful to those librarians and students of library science who have come to associate the name, Walford, with comprehensive and accurate listings as well as descriptions of reference materials in the fields of natural history, mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, geology, palaeontology, anthropology, biology, patents, medicine, engineering, agriculture, domestic science, management, communication, manufacturing, specialized trades and building.

Although each edition of Walford tends to become more international, this edition of the first volume continues to maintain a self-admitted British accent. New editions of the volumes dealing with general works, the humanities and the social sciences are promised, with a cumulative index to be located in the last volume.

The arrangement continues to be by the Universal Decimal Classification system. Some of the newer subjects featured in this edition include offshore engineering, ecology, biochemistry, energy, electronics, microcomputers and consumer protection. Also, a selection of annual reviews is provided, but the mention of textbooks has been cut severely. Excerpts from the evaluation of reference works in scholarly journals, both within and from outside library science, have been increased.

During the preparation of this volume, the editor and his colleagues have visited most of the major relevant libraries in the London area. In addition, recently published bibliographies and reviewing media have been checked scrupulously to discover titles deemed to be appropriate for this edition. Thus, although almost any bibliography is dated the day it is published—there are few

publications from 1979 or 1980 in this edition, for instance—Walford and his colleagues have performed an excellent service to librarianship in the preparation of this tome.

The classification of titles is consistent, logical and easily used. However, the subject headings, based on the Universal Decimal Classification scheme, could use some minor updating. Black people in the United States, for example, prefer to be called by that appellation rather than “Negroes” and the Library of Congress classification system, upon which Sheehy’s work is based, is being revised to reflect these types of changes in terminology. On the other hand, Walford has done a superior job in updating much of the scientific terminology in this volume.

Although the new edition includes many popular titles, the stress is on scholarly reference materials to be found in large academic, public and special libraries. The decision to maintain this emphasis is an appropriate one, for it will be in these types of libraries that the new edition will be used most heavily. Despite a few evaluative comments, most of the entries are descriptive of the works cited; but given the thousands of reference works described in the new edition, the editor could never have produced this volume had he attempted, for example, to assess each entry. Despite the criticisms of library science students of the failure of such works as those edited by Sheehy and Walford to be more critical, when the sheer magnitude of the task which these compilers undertake is considered, it is realized that they have no alternative than to content themselves primarily with descriptions of the multitudinous materials available in each discipline; and when they accomplish this feat alone, librarians and other scholars in the disciplines should be grateful rather than censorious. One useful feature, in this connection, is Walford’s inclusion of many citations to sources of further reviews for the individual entries. The accuracy of the descriptions, however, is in the tradition of excellence which has come to be associated with and expected from Walford.

For most practical purposes, in view of the thoroughness of the revision, this volume will supersede the third edition. This factor is especially relevant for the rapidly changing fields represented in the disciplines of science and technology. The editor, moreover, continues to expand the size of the work, making the addition of lists of new materials to well-established ones more feasible. Nevertheless, some librarians will want to keep previous editions of Walford to aid historical researchers. Few libraries will need to keep both editions available at the reference desks.

Walford has continued to resist the suggestions of reviewers that he, like Sheehy and Winchell before him, include introductions to the various categories, but this decision is within his prerogative to make, especially as these introductions are sometimes redundant as in the American work. Walford may feel that the space can be more appropriately used for listing and describing more materials.

A vast amount of energy goes into the compilation of such works as the Walford *Guide*. The seemingly endless tasks of checking reviewing media and current bibliographies, as well as authoritative lists in the subject disciplines, are only the beginning. Following this, the works must be located in libraries, examined carefully, and described succinctly but thoroughly. Few people who have not undertaken such a task can appreciate the reluctance of the editors of these guides to become involved in the preparation of new editions. Sheehy, Walford, Malclès and company deserve the approbation and appreciation of the profession for their significant contributions to the identification, selection, organization, retrieval and dissemination of information. No one with any maturity in librarianship could assess their contributions with anything less than awe at the magnitude of the tasks which they have attempted and the success with which they bring each of their efforts to fruition.

In view of the highly significant contributions of A. J. Walford it may be presumptuous to make two suggestions for the improvement of his internationally acclaimed endeavours. The first is a minor one, but the second, which has been made before, is of greater significance. The first is that in view of the ravaging inflation being experienced by the purchasers of these volumes, would it be feasible to eliminate the prices in subsequent editions, as these quickly become out of date?

The second suggestion is that it would be desirable if some means for updating the basic volumes be considered. Perhaps, for instance, supplementary volumes for the set could be issued at two- or three-year intervals, between the new editions planned for each six years. Another possibility would be an annual update, issued, for instance, in one of the publications of the Library Association.

Despite these comments, however, Walford's *Guide* has been established for many years as an accurate, usable, well arranged and trusted baedeker to reference materials; and this new edition of the volume on science and technology follows in the noble tradition which he and his colleagues have established. As such, it will be useful for building library collections and meeting the informational needs of library users as well as scholars and students in the disciplines represented in the volume. The book is recommended for purchase for academic, public, secondary school and special libraries, as well as by scholars and students in science and technology; and that audience may well include many people in the fields of library and information science.

THOMAS P. SLAVENS
*Professor, School of Library Science,
The University of Michigan,
and Visiting Professor,
College of Librarianship, Wales*