



1000 Inventions and Discoveries

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

This is a clearly written, well illustrated book. The inventions and discoveries are arranged chronologically in seven roughly equal sections: prehistory, 499-1400, 1401-1750, 1751-1850, and the last three half-centuries. Typically there are half a dozen entries to a page, with an occasional longer piece or spread. Subject matter is very wide-ranging, covering agriculture, engineering, mathematics, natural sciences, medicine, geography, music, fashion, entertainment, and on and on. Some more illustrations would have been helpful - the mortise and tenon joint, and perspective, for example, would have benefited. The Darwin piece mentions Malthus and Huxley but not Wallace. The DNA spread claims, wrongly, that Rosalind Franklin was Maurice Wilkins's assistant. Some of the most recent inventions - WAP and MP3, for example - may seem ephemeral. These are minor cavils about a carefully researched volume. There is one major disaster, however, for those who would hunt rather than browse: the index entries are almost exclusively by the first word of the entry title. A typical example: 'colour photography' is indexed only under C and '35mm camera' only under T, neither of them under 'photography', where the only index entry is to the piece on the work of Daguerre and Fox Talbot. There are many similar cases. As a result, the reader who wants to find entries about inventions in a chosen field has to be able to guess how they are titled. There is some cross-referencing but not enough to resolve this problem.

Running Order:

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