



The Secrets of Codes

Books Reviewed:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

A fascinating exploration of the world of hidden messages, from signs and symbols to ciphers and secret languages. Copiously illustrated with photos and artwork, the book traces the history of codes from prehistoric cave paintings, hieroglyphs and cuneiform writing to religious symbolism and medieval iconography. It covers much more than the world of military espionage and secret services. Codes seem to touch almost every part of our lives, whether in the brands and barcodes of the goods we buy, the dress codes and social etiquette we follow, or the digital codes that enable us to make phone calls or send emails. The breadth of coverage results in some strange juxtapositions at times, a particular favourite occurring in Codes of Work, where an architectural ground plan of St Paul's Cathedral sits opposite symbols for industrial and domestic plumbing and Pitman's shorthand! This is not of course a book primarily aimed at children, and the density and level of the text will challenge all but the most able readers. But the subject matter is so intriguing and its presentation so visual that it will undoubtedly prove popular as a reference source, particularly for the gallery of code alphabets and symbols which include everything from hand signals for crane operators and deep sea divers to bushcraft signs used by Plains Indians. Highly recommended for any would-be sleuth.

Running Order:

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