

The Oxford Companion to English Literature New edition by Margaret Drabble.

A treasure house of information, with over 7000 entries, alphabetically listed. Poetry, prose, plays, essays, hymns ancient and modern and philosophical treatises etc. Emphasis is given to British authors, but artists, composers and foreign authors whose work is relevant are also included. Also listed are titles (with plot summaries) and fictional characters not just from classics, but from detective and science fiction and from children's literature, even nursery rhymes. Other features include literary movements, newspapers, periodicals, printers, publishers and prizes. Major American writers, e.g. William Faulkner appear, but as stated in preface no coverage of Commonwealth authors. Margaret Atwood is the only Canadian. Readers wanting information on Canadian authors can find it in the following book.

The Oxford Companion to Canadian Literature edited by William Toye, 1983.

It consists of 700 entries, contributed by 192 authorities on their subjects. Organised as an alphabetical gathering of writers and genres of writing (i.e. anthologies, humour and satire, criticism etc.) not titles and characters for the most part. With

French translations it encompasses two literatures and native, ethnic and regional writing is also included. The first listing is "Acadian literature". There is very valuable information in this book, but entries are long and prosaic, losing impact thereby. A fifty page discussion of novels seems somewhat out-of-place in a compendium. JR

FLORENCE, a travellers' companion by Harold Acton and Edward Chaney.

The rich and glorious past of the city of Florence is vividly brought to life through the medium of letters, diaries and memoirs of bygone travellers. The great sights of the city are described alphabetically, B,C,D, the Baptistery, Campanile (bell-tower) and Duomo, the magnificent cathedral of Our Lady of the Flower ... P, Palazzi (palaces), Piazzae (squares, in one of which once stood Michaelangelo's David), and the Ponte Vecchio and other bridges ... S, Santa Croce and Santa Trinita (Holy Cross and Holy Trinity) both famous churches and U, the Uffizi Gallery which

houses such extremely famous paintings as Botticelli's Birth of Venus, Titian's Venus and a Raphael Madonna. Illustrations are in black and white, but the ochre tones of the cover beautifully convey the spirit of the great Renaissance city of the Medici family. Don't miss Dickens's picture at the end. JR

RIDEAU REVIEWS

Queen of Hearts by Susan Shreve.

Francesca Woodbine, beautiful granddaughter of an immigrants fortune teller, has inherited second sight. It does not prevent her from killing her fiance on the eve of their wedding, when she finds him in the arms of another woman. She bears his son and raises him among family and friends in a close knit community. More deaths follow, possessive love and gradually revealed secrets make this a powerful and entertaining novel. BS

Reference Books

Two new reference books have been added to the library shelves. Along with Mel Hurtig's 1985 Canadian Encyclopaedia and the Encyclopaedia Britannica, they are to be found in the new reading room at the Elgin Library.

Village Cooking by Joanne Smith.

Despite the reputation for poor cooking that is so often put upon the English, there are time tested country recipes, plain, simple and very very good to be found in this book. Reasonably priced ingredients for delicious meals unhampered by the unnecessary mystique often attached to European cuisine. There may be one or two homesick Englishmen or women who long for "Stewed eels" or "Bloaters in batter with egg and mustard sauce"! If you are not among the few then concentrate on the rich soups, filling hot pots and stews, old fashioned desserts and the basics which cover all manner of things. The cakes and bread chapter should reinstate tea time in this area. Dotted with bits of local lore this book is fun to read. BS

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