

The Making of the Micro: A History of the Computer. CHRISTOPHER EVANS. 2nd ed. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1983. vii, 114 p. ISBN 0-19-286035-6 \$4.75 pa.

Christopher Evans, noted computer expert and psychologist, died in 1979 before completing this short monograph. The forward and final chapter were written by Tom Stonier. The book has a light, friendly, professorial style. Its incisive summaries of concepts reflect its genesis in Evans' television series, *The Mighty Micro*. Evans performs the herculean task of condensing several hundred years of technological change and accompanying advancements in mathematical theory into about one hundred pages. He wisks easily from rudimentary number theory through the age of the abacus to the slide rule, mechanical calculators, and, finally, micro computers. This history is about the incremental advances in calculating and computing equipment over the centuries. It focuses on the people who were central to these developments, their inventions, and the strengths and weaknesses of their theoretical knowledge.

Those alienated by "computerese" will come away from this book feeling less threatened by binary arithmetic, Boolean operands, integrated circuits, micro-processors, core, mainframe, and mini. The book's other merits include an extensive index and a bibliography which includes a list of twenty hour-length interviews with giants of the modern computer era. *The Making of the Micro* provides an excellent way to penetrate the maze of "high tech," acquire esoteric trivia, and, at \$4.75, stay within the financial constraints of the office gift exchange.

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The Archival Storage Potential of Microfilm, Magnetic Media and Optical Data Discs. TONY HENDLEY. Hertford: National Reprographic Centre for Documentation. 1983. 77 p. ISBN 0-85267-211-X. £10.00.

The rapid pace of technological change leaves archivists as bemused as most people. Computers appear, grow in size, and then, paradoxically, shrink as they become more powerful. The 64K chip succeeds the 16K chip which will be displaced by the 256K chip, whose obsolescence is already presaged by chips in the research stage. Video tapes, video discs, and disk cameras evolve with amazing rapidity, only to be replaced by better-adapted or new species. In the technological sense, the life of an archival medium resembles life in the Hobbesian state of nature: nasty, brutish, and short.

Into this rich chaos comes Tony Hendley to guide archivists past many a hazard. His report on the archival storage potential of three comparatively new storage media: microfilm, magnetic media, and optical data discs was commissioned by the British National Bibliographic Research Fund and published by the Reprographic Centre for Documentation — an institution which advises librarians, archivists, and information managers on developments in documentation systems. The report begins by showing how limited storage space and deterioration of paper make alternatives to retention of originals increasingly attractive. Unfortunately Hendley looks at these two problems in this part of his report from the librarians' perspective