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Compiled by Chris Davis 2009.

**Method**

A rough contents listing was first generated by a subroutine in an indexing computer program I wrote. The program created a file for every one of the over sixteen thousand different words it found in the entire digital archive of Mercurys. It recorded in those files how every word was linked to its preceding and following words. Since a quarter of a million words have been written in Mercurys since 2001, that is half a million links stored in sixteen thousand separate files.

This program was initially written to experiment with three dimensional associative arrays but on the way looked like it could be used for indexing Mercury. On reflection a computer

generated, quarter million word entry index seemed over cumbersome. However by tracing links from every capitalised word, the program subroutine was able to regenerate and print out just about every article heading that had been written in Mercury. It also identified most of the authors simply as names found on a line of their own. Page numbers had already been identified for every word by the initial linking program so these were easily incorporated in the rough contents listing.

The rather indigestible computer generated contents were all tidied up by hand, throwing out spurious headings, clarifying incomplete entries and finding lost author names. Any further omissions or errors you spot can be put right in the next reiteration of the contents files.

### **The Link-Index Program.**

The vast resource of computer based Mercury word-links is a potentially very powerful reference tool. Already, just entering a word will give a list of every sentence the word occurs in. Simply entering the most common word "the" causes the reconstruction of virtually the entire Mercury archive !

Browsing the alphabetical list of the sixteen thousand different words found in Mercury and entering one that looks intriguing, will give every single context that word was used in. The context can be expanded to however many sentences you want either side of the word, because the chain of word-links is continuous all the way to the last word of the journal, and all the way back to the first word. Not only do you get the context but also the Mercury issue number and date, also the page the word occurs on, and there is a stab at the paragraph number too, for every single word.

The latter is not very accurate because the Adobe pdf-to-text translation program loses all the original paragraph line separations, and my program has to guess what is meant to be a paragraph. A paragraph is obvious to the human eye/brain complex but not to a simple computer program when text in a journal can be formatted in so many different ways. However it is good enough to pinpoint the reference in the original pdf file if you have it all ready to hand on your computer. Then the whole article can be seen in its original glory, diagrams, pictures and all.

To a limited extent the Link-Index program enables references to be followed back to the pre-digital Mercury issues. This is because the alphabetical index of Derek Allan's earlier contents listing has itself been link-indexed into the program's word files.

CD.