Notes and activities

BSG Autumn Meeting, Edinburgh

The autumn meeting of the British Society of Gastroenterology was held in Edinburgh on 20-23 September under the Presidency of Dr W. Sirus. The success of the meeting was enhanced by the Georgian splendours of the city, the friendly and efficient organisation and entertaining social programme. The scientific sessions, preceded by a very well-attended Teaching Day, provided a wide variety of basic and clinical papers. Professor Dame Sheila Sherlock delivered the Sir Arthur Hurst Memorial Lecture on 'Untoward hepatic drug reaction's to a packed auditorium. Pathologists', radiologists' and liver groups had lively sessions, there was a separate session for paediatric gastroenterology, and altogether 159 communications were read to the Society. There were Receptions at the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons and the Annual Dinner was at the Assembly Rooms, where the new President, Dr C. C. Booth, was duly installed.

Dr B. C. Morson was chosen as the President Elect at the Annual Business meeting, at which reports of the various officers of BSG testified to its continuing success and expansion. Dr David Barnard has completed his four-year term of office as Joint Secretary and is replaced by Dr Gordon Sladen, who joins Professor Michael Hobsley. The proposed merger between BSG and BSDE is still being discussed by the councils of the two Societies.

British Society for Digestive Endoscopy

The BSDE held a highly successful meeting in Edinburgh in conjunction with the British Society of Gastroenterology: it included a joint endoscopy/radiology symposium on 'The diagnosis of colonic disease'. The Annual Foundation Lecture was given by Dr P. Salmon on 'Endoscopy in the management of alimentary haemorrhage'. At the Annual Business Meeting Dr J. R. Bennett succeeded Dr D. D. Gibbs as Hon. Treasurer.

VI Peruvian Congress of Gastroenterology

This congress and those of associated societies will meet in Lima, Peru, from 13-18 November 1978. Details from Colegio Médico del Perú, Organising Committee of the VIth Peruvian Congress of Gastroenterology, Malecón Arrendariz 791, Miraflores, Lima 18, Peru.

Double Contrast Techniques in Gastrointestinal Radiology

A three-day seminar, 'Introduction to Double Contrast Techniques in Gastrointestinal Radiology', will be presented by the Department of Radiology of the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania from 8-10 March 1979. Details from Drs. H. Y. Kressel or I. Laufer, Department of Radiology, Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, 3400 Spruce Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104 (215-662-3264).

Books


Mr Harley has written a monograph about achalasia which exhaustively reviews the modern literature (nearly 300 references) around a framework of an analysis of 75 case records. The review is comprehensive enough to be a reference work for modern diagnostic procedures, ideas on management, and a range of complications. A detailed discussion of the radiological features of the disease, and the differential diagnosis from obstructive and motor disorders is excellently illustrated by 80 x-ray pictures. The section on oesophagospasm is adequate, but terse, because it represents his experience only; he makes the important points that the achalasic sphincter does not resist the passage of an endoscope and that retention oesophagitis is common but different from peptic oesophagitis. Respiratory complications are extensively considered, including the role of atypical mycobacteria. The pathogenesis of associated joint disease and of carcinoma of the oesophagus are discussed. Some readers may disagree with his separation of 'diffuse spasm' from achalasia in diagnosis and surgical treatment.

His preference for myotomy rather than brusque dilatation is argued. He discusses the details of the operation, the management of the hiatus, of associated hiatal herniation, the methods of radiological and symptomatic assessment of results, the complications of the operation, the incidence of reflux after myotomy, the causes of failure of the operation, and the management of the sigmoid oesophagus. Although the author is a surgeon, the book will be equally appreciated by physicians and surgeons as an excellent and well-indexed compendium. It is well produced, though in small print, so that its pocket size includes about 82 000 words.

D. A. W. EDWARDS

Antigen Absorption by the Gut


The late F. W. R. Brambell established Bangor as a centre for research on protein transport across the epithelia of the gut and the placenta, culminating in his book on the transmission of passive immunity from mother to young, published in 1970. Dr Hemmings and his group have developed a broader interest in the various aspects of protein transport across the small intestinal mucosa, and a series of meetings on this topic have been held in Bangor in the last few years. The twenty chapters of this book are based on presentations at two of these symposia.

A broad range of subjects is touched upon, including mechanisms of binding of antigen to brush border; postulated receptors for protein at the enterocyte membrane; local immune reactions to protein and microbial antigens; and various clinical aspects of food intolerance and of coeliac disease. As in any conference proceedings the style of the papers is very variable and ranges from speculative essays to detailed accounts of experimental work. The absence of discussion of the various presentations is to be regretted, since often this is the most stimulating and informative part of a book based on conference proceedings.

Clinicians should take time to glance at two chapters—that on urticaria and dietary hypersensitivity, by Denham and his colleagues which gives a very lucid account of the aetiologies, investigation, and management of this note of common clinical problems. A highly controversial matter, that of the associations between coeliac disease, schizophrenia, and gluten, is aired by Dr Dohan.

I would say this is a book to be skimmed in the library or the bookshop and perhaps one or two chapters found of interest by most gastroenterologists.
Achalasia of the Cardia

D. A. W. Edwards

Gut 1978 19: 954
doi: 10.1136/gut.19.10.954

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http://gut.bmj.com/content/19/10/954.1.citation

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