Notes and activities

BSG Research Award 1980
Five hundred word summaries of personal research work are invited by the Research Committee who will recommend to Council the recipient of the award for 1980. The award consists of a medal and £100 prize. Entrants must be 40 years or less (on 31 December 1980) but need not be a member of the BSG. All (or a substantial part) of the work must have been performed in the UK or Eire. The recipient will be required to deliver a 40 minute lecture at the Plenary Session of the Spring meeting in 1981. Applications (six copies) should be made to: The Honorary Secretary, BSG, The Rayne Institute, 5 University Street, London WCl E 6J, no later than 1 November 1980.

Hurst Memorial Fund
A special Sir Arthur Hurst Memorial Fund was inaugurated by the British Digestive Foundation at the meeting celebrating the centenary of his birth, held in July 1979 at the Royal College of Physicians. The Fund has now been closed and Dr Thomas Hurst, Chairman of the British Digestive Foundation, has suggested that a suitable memorial to Sir Arthur would be to use the income from the Fund for international contact between research workers. Sir Arthur Hurst was an enthusiastic medical traveller and the BDF will support in the name of Sir Arthur Hurst visits abroad by British research workers to further their own work by discussions with other researchers, or by learning new techniques. The money will be used particularly to support working visits and the award will be known as the Hurst Research Travel Grant. Details are given below.

British Digestive Foundation
British Digestive Foundation for research into the prevention and treatment of alimentary and liver disorders, is now offering the W E C Knott Fellowship for research in gastroenterology. It will be awarded for research into the aetiology, prevention, and treatment of disorders of the digestive tract and liver. The Fellowship will be given to an applicant of senior registrar or equivalent status in the United Kingdom, and the salary will be commensurate with the applicant's salary at the time of appointment. The award for fulltime research will be granted for one year, extendable for a further year. The closing date is 5 September 1980, and the successful applicant will be expected to take up the Fellowship in October 1980.

The Foundation also invites applications for a Research Travel Grant. This Grant will be awarded to enable trainees in gastroenterology to travel abroad, particularly in Europe, for educational and scientific purposes. The Grant, funded by the Sir Arthur Hurst Memorial Fund, may be used for travel and subsistence for educational purposes in gastroenterology. The closing date for applications, which should give full details of the applicant and of the proposed trip, is 5 September 1980. The successful applicant would be expected to take up the travel grant during the academic year 1980–81.

Application forms for the Fellowship may be obtained from The Secretary, British Digestive Foundation, Room D, 7 Chandos Street, Cavendish Square, London W1A 2LN, and application for the Hurst Research Travel Grant should also be made to this address.

New Journal: Regulatory Peptides
A new journal, Regulatory Peptides, has been launched under the editorship of Stephen R Bloom, Royal Postgraduate Medical School, Hammersmith Hospital, and Floyd E Bloom, The Salk Institute, San Diego. Its aim is to provide a medium for the prompt publication of interdisciplinary studies on the physiology and pathology of peptides of the gut, endocrine and nervous systems which regulate cell or tissue function. Details of this bi-monthly journal may be obtained from the publishers, Elsevier/North-Holland Biomedical Press, PO Box 211, 1000 AE Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

International Congress of Colo-Proctology
This International Congress will be held, in association with the 7th Meeting of the Association Européenne et Méditerranéenne de Colo-Proctologie, at Prague and Karlovy Vary, Carlsbad, 11–13 May 1981. The programme will cover precancerous conditions of the rectum and colon and new methods in colo-proctology. Details may be obtained from Professor Z Mafatka, Congress of Colo-Proctology, Vítězného února 31, 120–26 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia. Phone 294141. Telex 121–293.

International Symposium on the Brain-Gut Axis
An international symposium on the brain-gut axis will be held in Florence, Italy, from 29 June to 1 July 1981, in honour of Professor V Ersperger. The theme will be the regulatory peptides found in both the brain and gut. Abstracts, of up to one page, must reach John H Walsh, VA Wadsworth Medical Center, CURE, Building 115, Los Angeles, California 90073 USA before 1 March 1981. Further information may be obtained from him at that address.

Books
Recent Advances in Gastroenterology
This new edition of Recent Advances is particularly welcome, as Professor Bouchier has tackled the difficult task of updating the reader in the whole sphere of gastroenterology rather than presenting a series of specialised topics as in previous editions. The Editor has chosen a distinguished group of contributors from Great Britain and the United States. These writers have reviewed progress in each major aspect of the system in the first eight chapters, while the last two sections deal with gastrointestinal endoscopy and paediatric gastroenterology. Clearly the limitation of space set by a volume of this size has led to some restriction of text and the illustrations are few but generally the coverage of each topic is concise and clear, while the references are extensive. The two opening chapters on the oesophagus, stomach and duodenum cover this large field with particular attention to new developments, including the difficult topic of the control of the gastro-oesophageal sphincter. The results of the numerous trials which have been conducted on the treatment of peptic ulceration by H2-receptor blockers and surgery have been summarised in a series of useful tables. Particularly well presented were the two sections on the ‘Liver’ and ‘Hepatitis—virus and antigens’, where a great deal of new material is presented in a clear and readable manner. Current endoscopic practice has been summarised in a small useful chapter with some emphasis on the growing field of therapeutic endoscopy. The paediatric section is a welcome reminder to the general
physician of the plethora of congenital and metabolic problems encountered by his colleagues specialising in this aspect of gastroenterology.

This volume will be a valuable guide to the registrar in training as well as to the general physician wishing to keep abreast of developments in gastroenterology, while the specialist in the field will find the extensive references of considerable value. Altogether this is a well-balanced informative book and a valuable addition to any medical library.

R A PARKINS

Clinics in Gastroenterology (Vol. 9 No. 1) Virus Hepatitis Guest Editor: Sheila Sherlock DBE. (Pp. 228. Illustrated. £9.00.) W B Saunders: Eastbourne. 1980. This issue of the Clinics continues the high standard of its predecessors with a collection of 11 authoritative reviews on various aspects of viral hepatitis (strangely the volume is called virus hepatitis) by authors chiefly from the United Kingdom. There has been continuous progress in our knowledge of the hepatitis B virus since the Australian antigen was discovered in 1964 and now one major advance—namely, active immunisation—must be close. All aspects of hepatitis B are covered in five chapters, ranging from the now complex assay of serological markers associated with the virus to the association of hepatoma with carriage of the virus. Hepatitis A, and non-A non-B hepatitis are also fully described in separate chapters. Sadly, there is nothing on unusual causes of hepatitis in this country and abroad, such as glandular fever, yellow fever, herpes simplex, etc., which could have been substituted for a strangely out-of-place last chapter on four examples of drug-related hepatitis.

As so often, the histological figures are disappointing, but the book can be highly recommended.

R P H THOMPSON

Prostaglandins By D F Horrobin. (Pp. 391; £12.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1979. This book covers many topics, including a factual account of prostaglandins with regard to the gut, and hypotheses on gastrointestinal diseases. However, these aspects comprise less than six pages, and this limits the interest from a purely gastroenterological viewpoint, although sections such as prostaglandin biochemistry and measurement are obviously relevant to all disciplines. Other chapters include accounts of the actions of prostaglandins on the circulation, kidney, nervous system, eye, and respiration, and their roles in inflammation, metabolism, and cell function. In addition there are several chapters on prostaglandins and various diseases.

Dr Horrobin aimed to produce more than just an easy-to-read reference book. His stated goal was to stimulate, provoke or even infuriate others with his hypotheses, and to make various philosophical points. These include his view that ideas without much experimental evidence should be freely published, on the basis that even if they are wrong they will regardless lead to valuable work.

Dr Horrobin makes many hypotheses using interpretations of his own work which are often presented as facts. Only those readers conversant with the literature will know that the validity of many such interpretations is far from established. But perhaps some investigators will be directed into the 'right' research for what may be the 'wrong' reasons. So if you are looking for an account on prostaglandins and the gastrointestinal tract, this book will outline various areas and direct you to reviews and research papers. If you want a scientifically wide-ranging, somewhat racy, unconventional book, you will probably find this one stimulating, provoking, or even infuriating.

ALAN BENNETT

Reoperative Gastro-intestinal Surgery (Second edition) By Thomas Taylor White and R. Cameron. (Pp. 331. Illustrated. £44.25.) Little Brown: USA. 1980. Rescue surgery is the province of a particular type of surgeon, but this book will appeal to those who from time to time have to perform this form of surgery on their patients. It touches in several of the chapters on the avoidance of the problem but mostly assumes that it has happened. The chapters are usually contributed by more than one author and are comprehensive—in some instances ever so, in that they appear almost to dredge up every conceivable complication. Yet the attention to detail sufficient to make the book informative in all areas is only true of the upper gastrointestinal sections. Two hundred and sixty five pages are devoted to oesophagus, stomach, duodenum, biliary tract, and pancreas, while only 40 are devoted to the small intestine and colon. In this respect the text might well have been called 'reoperative surgery in the upper gastro-intestinal tract.' The section on wound healing, admittedly a problem after repeated operations, adds little that is new in a text mainly concerned with surgical tactics in the critical choice of a salvage operation.

But the book is reasonably up to date in that it brings in the use of endoscopy as a means of investigating the post-surgical problem and mentions its use as an alternative to reoperating on, for example, the biliary tract; it is at its most authoritative when dealing with the stomach, biliary tract, and pancreas, where the experience of the senior authors is reflected in the text.

Each surgeon reading this book (which is a second edition) will experience a series of personal déjà vu phenomena at times. One wonders whether so many of these complications will happen in the lifetime of the next generation of surgeons as H₂ receptor antagonists and highly selective vagotomy and the like alter the surgical scene. Only time will tell. At the present time this book is a monument to the ingenuity of the surgeons who have devised such varied means of circumventing the perils into which their patients have, for better or worse, landed. The authors use a colloquial approach at times for what must have been a very difficult task and in which it is this reviewer’s opinion they have been reasonable successful. A book both for consultation by those in training or for quick reference by others when all is not well surgically.

ADAM N SMITH

Books received


Recent Advances in Gastroenterology

R A Parkins

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Updated information and services can be found at:
http://gut.bmj.com/content/21/6/555.citation

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