sphincter-saving operations. In subsequent editions, perhaps the authors of this chapter could deal with the pharmacological implications of an ileostomy, that is, the impaired absorption of drugs – for example, oral contraceptives.

The chapter on acute bacterial diarrhoea is most valuable by bringing the reader up to date on organisms which only recently have been brought to our attention as a cause of unusual diarrhoeas – for example, campylobacter, yersinia and *Clostridium difficile*. Cancer remains the major colonic disease and the three concluding chapters of this book on bacteria, diet and cancer, on screening tests, and on adjuvant and palliative therapy, bring the clinician up to date in these rapidly advancing fields.

It is unlikely that the individual clinician will be able to afford all books in this series but the practising gastroenterologist must seriously consider acquiring this particular monograph, which so clearly deals with the important advancing edge of disorders of the large intestine. Attractively produced, it has very few spelling or stylistic errors. At 9p a page, however, it is somewhat over priced.

R SHIELDS

A guide to gastrointestinal motility Edited by J Christensen and D L Wingate. (Pp. 253; illustrated; £25.00.) Bristol: John Wright, 1983.

Medical books entitled 'A guide to . . .' are apt to be so superficial that they have little value. This volume, with eight well known contributing authors, is a notable exception.

After two splendid chapters reviewing the innervation of the gastrointestinal tract and the physiology of its smooth muscle, the oesophagus, stomach, small intestine, biliary tract, and colon are considered individually. There is then a refreshingly realistic appraisal of the techniques used to study gastrointestinal motility, emphasising what they can and cannot achieve rather than the procedural details (for which an adequate bibliography is given). The book concludes with a brief synopsis of clinical syndromes attributable to motility disorders, which may be helpful to scientists without medical training.

For the most part, the book has an unashamed physiological rather than clinical emphasis, and this is both its strength and its weakness. The value of explaining clinical abnormality in terms of deranged physiology is self-evident, but to omit discussion of the irritable bowel syndrome simply because it is undefined physiologically seems inappropriately purist.

For whom is this book most useful? In my view it provides ideal introductory reading for any research fellow embarking on a project concerned with gastrointestinal motility. Established research workers will find it can provide them with prompt enlightenment on topics at the fringe of their own special interest and knowledge. There is presently no concise textbook which fulfils either of these needs satisfactorily, and in consequence most departments with a research interest in any aspect of motility will find this a worthwhile purchase.

ROBERT C HEADING

Operative surgery: alimentary tract and abdominal wall Vol 3: Colon, rectum and anus Edited by I P Todd and L P Fielding. (Pp. 647; illustrated; £85.00.) London: Butterworths, 1983.

This edition replaces that published in 1977. It is considerably longer as it includes a number of new chapters reflecting advances and changes of emphasis in colorectal surgery. In many instances illustrations from the previous edition have been enlarged or revised for clarity and the text of some pre-existing chapters has been rewritten.

On general topics there are new chapters on suturing technique, stapling devices, and sepsis prevention. The contents have been rearranged with a large section devoted to the formation and management of stomas. The new chapters included here are good, but there is considerable repetition in the duplicate chapters on stoma creation which might perhaps be combined in the future, especially if the size of the book continues to increase. There are also other areas in the book where the same criticism applies.

The section on inflammatory bowel disease reflects the progress in the preservation of continence and includes new chapters on reservoir ileostomy and restorative proctocolectomy with ileal reservoir.

There are a number of areas where the reader may compare techniques used by different authors. For example, there are many different mechanical and antibiotic bowel preparations described and there are three chapters on different methods of haemorrhoidectomy.

This edition is, therefore, a thoroughly up to date comprehensive technical guide to anal and colorectal surgery. Its size should not act as a deterrent as it covers an enormous field and the individual sections and chapters are easily read and are thoughtfully illustrated.

I A DONOVAN