

## Notes and activities

### British Society of Gastroenterology and British Society for Digestive Endoscopy: preliminary announcement.

The next Annual Meeting of the British Society of Gastroenterology and British Society for Digestive Endoscopy will be held at the University of Surrey, Guildford, from 18 to 21 September 1979. There will be a teaching half-day on Tuesday, 18 September. The Sir Arthur Hurst Lecture will be held on Thursday, 20 September. Full details will be sent to all members of both Societies in due course. All preliminary inquiries should be addressed to the Hon. Local Secretary, Dr K. F. R. Schiller, Cherwell, Knowl Hill, Woking, Surrey.

### Newcastle Conference

A conference on cell proliferation in the gastrointestinal tract will be held in Newcastle upon Tyne, 10-12 September 1979. Abstracts by 15 May, applications before 15 July 1979. Details from Dr D. R. Appleton, Department of Medical Statistics, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4AA, England.

### Société Nationale Française de Proctologie

A meeting will be held in Marseilles on 20 October 1979 on 'Les incontinences anales'. Details from Dr P. Délécourt, Hôpital Nord, Marseilles, France.

### Ileostomy Association of Great Britain and Ireland

Mr Leslie Kingston, MBE, has retired as Director of Administration of the Ileostomy Association and is succeeded by Mr Chris Penney. The Association's new address is 23 Winchester Road, Basingstoke, Hants (telephone: Basingstoke (STD 0256) 21288).

## Books

**Viral Hepatitis: Etiology, Epidemiology, Pathogenesis and Prevention** By C. N. Vyas, S. N. Cohen, and R. Schmid. (Pp. 748. Illustrated. \$49.50.) Franklin Institute Press: Philadelphia. 1978. This book comprises the proceedings of an International Symposium on Viral Hepa-

titis held in March 1978 in San Francisco.

World authorities attended this meeting and the paper presented provides about the last word on viral hepatitis as of March 1978.

The section on transfusion hepatitis, with particular reference to non-A and non-B hepatitis, is particularly timely.

The editors are to be congratulated on the speed at which this book has appeared. It is strongly recommended for reference for all those working in the field.

SHEILA SHERLOCK

**Substance P (Volume 1) 1977** By P. Skrabaneck and D. Powell. (Pp. 181. £11.50.) Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh. 1978.

This book is a review of all published data on Substance P from 1931 to November 1977. There are about 700 references, including some papers in press at the time the book was written. The eleven chapters deal with chemistry, assay methods, structure-activity relationships, occurrence and distribution, inactivation, pharmacological and functional interactions, pharmacological effects, neurotransmission, pain and opiates, psychopharmacology, and pathophysiology. In addition, there is a short foreword which briefly describes the history of Substance P, a fairly good index, and the references presented alphabetically in full.

Each chapter is a catalogue and brief description of the published work. Unfortunately, the authors rarely give their own views on contentious aspects or on the direction that future research should take, and they do not comment on the quality of the research they cite. Nevertheless, the book is undoubtedly of value to all those interested in Substance P. It gives a good overall picture, and provides an easy and quick way of finding out what has been done. Although only a small part concerns the gastrointestinal tract, the book will be of value to those interested in gut hormones and basic aspects of gastroenterology.

A. BENNETT

**The Biological Importance of Bile Salts (Frontiers of Biology, Vol. 47)** By G. A. D. Haslewood. (Pp. 206. Illustrated. US \$55.75; D fl 125.00.) North-Holland: Amsterdam. 1978.

Yet another text on bile salts? Well, yes, but a book with a difference: it is aimed particularly at biologists and has an emphasis on the comparative biochemistry and evolutionary aspects of bile acids and bile alcohols. Professor Haslewood

paints a large canvas and covers the physiology, chemistry, biosynthesis, medical significance, as well as the comparative biochemistry of these important sterols; and all in a mere 190 pages. Intentionally the chemistry of the bile salts has not been presented in any detail. The book is well set out and the text easy to read; but inevitably the superficiality of cover elicits minor criticism. It is not strictly correct to claim that 'both canalicular and ductular bile secretion are divisible into a "bile-salt dependent" and a "bile-salt independent" phase'; more could have been made of the striking species differences in bile secretory patterns; the important controversy whether bile acid or cholesterol is responsible for feed-back control of bile acid synthesis is treated too lightly; and the section dealing with the complex changes in bile salts accompanying liver disease might have benefited from greater elaboration. This is not a book for the expert; but it will have considerable appeal to a wide audience of clinicians and basic scientists who have an interest in the bile. Inevitably the strength of the book lies in the remarkable account of the distribution of bile salts within the animal kingdom and their evolutionary significance. What a fascinating story and who better to tell it than Professor Haslewood?

I. A. D. BOUCHIER

**Liver and Aging 1978** Edited by Kenichi Kitani. (Pp. 388. Illustrated. ca: £35.) Elsevier/North Holland. Biomedical Press: Amsterdam. 1978.

This unusual book is a collection of papers read at a symposium on Liver and Aging held in Tokyo. The range of subjects is enormous but chiefly describes experimental work in animals and includes not only papers on the morphological and biochemical changes with age, but also changes in bile acid metabolism and the kinetics of drugs in man. The difficulty of the field is emphasised by the editor who points out that it may cost £400 to maintain one rat for three years until it is old enough for experiments.

Some of the papers are of limited value, but others contain fascinating data that would be difficult otherwise to find. This volume at about £35.00 cannot be generally recommended, but it will be valuable to those in the whole field of aging, and, in particular, the pharmacokinetic chapters will interest clinical pharmacologists.

R. P. H. THOMPSON