Notes and activities

American Philosophical Society

Dr C C Booth, editor of *Gut*, has been elected a member of The American Philosophical Society. The Society, 'for promoting useful knowledge', was founded in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin and colleagues. It was the first learned society in America and was founded in emulation of the Royal Society of London and the Society of Arts of Dublin.

Hurst Research Travel Grant

The British Digestive Foundation has awarded the first Arthur Hurst Travel Grant to Dr H J Klass of the North Manchester General Hospital who will be working at the departments of gastroenterology at L'Hopital Saint-Marguerite in Marseilles (Professor Henri Sarles) and the Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität in Frankfurt (Professor Meinhard Classen) studying pancreatic disease and clinical gastroenterology as an extension to his work in Manchester.

XI International Congress of Allergology and Clinical Immunology

This Congress will be held at the Barbican Centre for Arts and Conferences, London, 17-22 October 1982. Details from Conference Associates ICACI, 34 Stamford Road, London W8 5PZ.

1st Franco-British Joint Meeting on Gastrointestinal Pathology (combined meeting of BSG Pathologists' Group and Club D'Histopathologie Digestive)

This meeting will take place in Rheims, France, on 23-24 OCTOBER 1981. Details may be obtained from Dr J H O Earle, Department of Pathology, Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, London SW15.

American Pancreatic Association' Inc., and the National Pancreatic Cancer Project

The annual joint scientific meeting of these two bodies will be held on 6-7 November 1981, in Chicago, Illinois, USA. The deadline for submission of abstracts is 28 August 1981. Details from Dr Isidore Cohn, National Pancreatic Cancer Project, 1542 Tulane Avenue, New Orleans, Louisiana 70112.

British Society for Immunology

The Summer Meeting will take place on Thursday 23 July and Friday, 24 July, 1981 and will include a Symposium on gastrointestinal immunology on the Thursday and simultaneous sessions of free papers on gastrointestinal immunology on the Friday in the Medical and Biological Sciences Building, Southampton Medical School. Further details from Professor Ralph Wright, Professorial Medical Unit, Southampton General Hospital, Tremona Road, Southampton.

Books

Infestions of the Gastrointestinal Tract: Microbiology, Pathophysiology, and Clinical Features

By L Du Pont and L K Pickering. (Pp. 273. Illustrated. \$24.50.) Plenum: New York. 1980.

Recent advances in the microbiology and pathogenesis of gastrointestinal infestions have led to a number of publications and this most recent volume deals with microbiology, pathophysiology as well as clinical features. Infections of the gastrointestinal tract separate into a compact group of disorders which can be encompassed conveniently in a book such as the present volume. Unfortunately, this convenience does not extend to the clinical situation where patients present with diarrhoea, which may be of infective or non-infective aetiology. The authors confine themselves to dealing with the problem at a stage when the diagnosis has been established. It is in the unstable no-man's-land before the stage of confirmation that so much difficulty and *angst* occur.

Within the strict limits set by the authors, this is an interesting, useful book, containing a great deal of information. Eleven chapters make up the text starting with immune mechanisms in infectious diarrhoea, followed by chapters on specific pathogens, and ending with a section on the diagnosis and treatment of acute diarrhoea and fluid and dietary management. There are good sections on salmonella infections and bacillary dysentery: the point is made that agents which reduce gut motility, so commonly used, may occasionally prolong the illness and can contribute to the development of toxic dilatation of the colon. It is interesting to note that cholera and *Esch. coli* diarrhoea are discussed together in a

single chapter that is one of the best things in the book. The mechanism of action of cholera toxin and heat labile *Esch. coli* toxin via adenylyl cyclase and cyclic AMP is well done in rather more detail than might be expected in a volume of this size.

It is strange to find a book on infective diarrhoea published in 1980 which does not include some reference to antibiotic-induced diarrhoea in general and pseudo-membranous enterocolitis in particular. *Clostridium difficile* does not appear in the index.

Each chapter has a useful and full list of references: salmonellosis gets 226 and *cholera/Esch. coli*, 262. There are a number of line drawings and some black and white plates of very varying quality; the plate (5.2) on page 93 purporting to show rose spots in typhoid fever should be discarded.

This book cannot be unreservedly recommended; its appeal will be mainly to the specialist wishing to confirm a contemporary view with recent references. The price of £24.50 means that it will be consulted more often in institutional rather than in personal libraries.

HILLAS SMITH

Radiographic Atlas of Colon Disease

Edited by E I Greenbaum. (Pp. 664. Illustrated. \$70.00). Year Book Medical Publishers: Chicago, London. 1980.

This is an interesting and unusual book, more a series of disconnected essays than a text book. Sixty-nine authors have contributed to 49 chapters with 849 illustrations. As might be expected, the book covers the whole range of colonic radiology but its particular strength lies in the numerous chapters on unusual subjects such as Behçet's disease, herpetic colitis, autonomic dysreflexia, duplication of the colon, and so on. Although many of the chapters are short, they contain much useful information for both gastroenterologists and radiologists which is not readily available elsewhere. The book would be worth having for the references alone.

The illustrations are small and not particularly well produced but they are, in general, adequate to illustrate the points in the text. A surprisingly high proportion show single contrast examinations, reflecting the relatively recent conversion to double contrast enemas on the other side of the Atlantic.

The organisation of the book is odd,

the chapters being arranged alphabetically. Thus 'Technique of examination' is sandwiched between 'Right lower quadrant disease' and 'Trauma to the colon and rectum'. This is not so confusing as it sounds, because this is not a book to be read through from cover to cover. It is one to dip into when seeking information. In spite of its title it cannot be regarded as an introductory text. It will, however, be a very welcome addition to the library in departments of gastroenterology and radiology.

KELSEY FRY

Notebook of Medical Physiology: Gastrointestinal with Aspects of Total Parenteral Nutrition By Ross W Hawker. (Pp. 246. Illustrated. £4.95.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, and New York. 1981.

This book is a 'revision text for . . . postgraduates' and the author admits that its 'unique' style, deliberately cryptic, will not please everyone. It covers the normal physiological mechanisms involved in secretion, absorption, digestion and motility of the tract and in gastrointestinal liver function. It starts with a short factual account of gut hormones, which is followed by the excellent physiology sections. The final chapters on the assessment of gastrointestinal function are superficial. The chapters are written in the form of notes which are occasionally difficult to understand. Each chapter is followed by a series of multiple-choice questions and answers.

The physiology chapters, very detailed and extensive, are made up of notes, tables, and flow diagrams. Sometimes these diagrams are too complicated and need some explanation. The principles of carbohydrate metabolism, for example, are summarised in a small illustration with 17 abbreviations (some explained) and one has to strain to read the small print and follow the arrows. Physiological principles are presented well but there is no space in a 'notebook' to discuss any controversial points. Histamine's role as final mediator of gastric acid secretion is accepted without much discussion and mention is not made of K^+ ATPase. Gastric mucus is dismissed in seven lines and the newish concept of cytoprotection has been omitted. However, the book is only supposed to be a notebook and a list of useful review and original papers follows each section. The final chapter is a

practical guide on how to set up and manage total parenteral nutrition and, as such, is quite out of place in a physiology book. A description of the physiological principles governing both enteral and parenteral nutrition would have been more appropriate.

This book is a successful attempt to summarise gastrointestinal physiology and one becomes used to the initially unnerving style. An enormous amount of information is packed into the physiology sections, which are a welcome addition to a personal library. Few postgraduates would tolerate the style for revision. Although cheap, the book is nicely presented and will be a useful rapid reference book.

R P WALT

Nutrition and its Disorders 3rd edition. By D S McLaren. (Pp. 277. Illustrated. £5.95.) Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh and London. 1981.

To compress the whole enormous field of nutrition—normal, abnormal, and therapeutic—into a 270 page volume is an extraordinary achievement, especially when the result is lucid, readable, and, mostly, up to date. The book is laid out in six sections, on food and the physiology of nutrition, on nutritional diseases, on the role of diet and nutrition in other diseases, on nutritional disorders at different ages, on nutritional 'interrelationships' (topics such as immunity and drugs), and on community aspects.

As a short overview of the subject, this book has no serious rival but for the serious enquirer it is strictly a starting point. Gastroenterologists will be disappointed by the section on the gastrointestinal system, which, surprisingly, is said to have 'resisted investigation and understanding more than most systems'. Perhaps the author has lacked time and opportunity to study gastroenterology, but there are many inaccuracies. Two areas of intense interest—enteral nutrition and dietary fibre—receive scanty treatment. In fact, the whole sweep of the fibre story is dismissed in half a page. The sections on alcohol and cancer are also too short considering their importance to society.

The worlds of nutrition and medicine have become seriously separated from each other in recent years. It is the gut which bridges the gap between food and the body and gastroenterologists are the

most appropriate people to repair the links between nutrition and medicine. It would help if they and their students browsed through this book.

K W HEATON

Delay in publication

We much regret the delay in the appearance of *Gut* because of printing difficulties.