Markers of colonic cell differentiation. Progress in cancer research and therapy, vol. 29 Edited by S R Wolman and A J Mastromarino. (Pp. 431; illustrated; \$72.00.) New York: Raven Press, 1984. In contrast to the large volume of information about differentiation in certain epithelia, there is little information regarding markers of colonic cell differentiation. Hopefully this book will be the first of many on this subject. The book is composed of individual contributions covering a broad range of topics. These are somewhat arbitrarily grouped as morphological markers, immunological markers, metabolic and histochemical markers, transport, hormones and receptor functions, and genotypic markers. Various chapters concerning other systems are included where they are applicable to colon studies. The publication of this book comes at a time when there is increasing interest in growing colonic epithelium *in vitro*. The importance of full characterisation of cells before investigation cannot be overemphasised.

This book deals with morphological markers of differentiation including light and electron microscopic methods. Lectin and mucin histochemistry are also discussed. The section on immunological markers includes chapters on the usefulness of monoclonal antibodies both as cell markers and as reagents for clinical use. Some aspects of colonic transport function and control of cell proliferation are also covered.

In addition to differentiation markers of normal colon, frequent reference is made to differences observed in premalignant or malignant epithelium. This book will make interesting reading for both scientists involved in large bowel cancer research and for those involved in defining markers for normal and malignant cells of other systems.

R P H THOMPSON

Current hepatology volume 4 Edited by G Gitnick. (Pp. 490; illustrated; price not stated.) Chichester, Sussex: Wiley, 1984.

The extraordinary frequency of liver meetings this September gives one, with all the travelling involved, a chance to catch up on reading of volumes such as this. It is also very easy to check whether the material is as up to date as it should be. This fourth volume of *Current hepatology* has the advantage that the data are not simply presented as staccato fact but are properly dissected and reviewed by the chapter editor. This comes over best in Hal Conn's 32 pages on the complications of portal hypertension. In dealing with the new pharmacological agents propranolol and somatostatin that have been introduced in the past three years, one is left at the

end with a very clear picture of what is now established to be certain, that requires further study or confirmation. It is of interest how differences between the various studies on propranolol remain unexplained. The compass of the book is wide with the other chapters on hepatitis, serology of liver disease, alcoholic liver disease, cirrhosis, drug metabolism, hepatobiliary surgery, liver tumours, cholestasis, hepatobiliary imaging gallstones, and bilirubin metabolism. All the chapters are up to date and this is an excellent review book for the practicing clinical hepatologist, as well as for the primarily research orientated worker.

ROGER WILLIAMS

Mechanisms of hepatocyte injury and death Edited by D Keppler, H Popper, L Bianchi, and W Reutter. (Pp. 409; illustrated; £45.00.) Lancaster: MTP Press, 1984.

This volume (no 38 in the series of Falk Symposia) is the proceedings of a meeting held during the Basel Liver Week in October, 1983. It deals with a variety of aspects of hepatocyte injury. It is difficult to imagine a better list of contributors – Desmet and De Vos on the morphology of acute liver injury; Arias on hepatic ion transport; Rasmussen, McLean *et al*, Farber, and Orrenius and his colleagues all on the role of calcium in cell injury – almost all are worthy of mention. Hans Popper has written a masterly introduction and a summary of the meeting. Virtually all the contributors are worth reading, and as the book has come out so quickly they are all reasonably up to date. The only problem with this book is that it costs £45 – but a must for your library!

NEIL MCINTYRE

Transphincteric surgery of the rectum By A Huber, A H Cv Hochester, and M Allgower. (Pp. 83; illustrated; \$46.30.) Berlin: Springer-Verlag, 1984.

This is a well produced and beautifully illustrated monograph with coloured plates of an uncommon approach to the rectum which has been popularised in recent years by Aubrey York-Mason. It is arranged in four sections, the first an introduction with a short note on physiological testing of the anal sphincter mechanism. The second section consists of an anatomical description of the rectum with dissections and diagrams to explain the transphincteric approach. This is rather laboured as the male and female pelvis are described separately with considerable repetition. The third section is a step by step description of the operation with the variations of laying open the rectum with or without sphincter

division and sleeve resection. The final section consists of results and discussion. Eighty one patients were operated upon in an eight year period from 1974–1982 and the main groups of patients were: 36 with carcinoma, nine with adenomas, 23 with rectal prolapse, five with fistulas and four with traumatic lesions.

The place of this operation has been considerably overstated and few surgeons would agree that it is a satisfactory operation for the treatment of low rectal cancer, meaning to the authors' tumour between 4 cm and 12 cm from the anal verge. Small carcinomas can be excised more easily and with less trauma via the per anal route. Most would not consider this a satisfactory route for treating rectal prolapse, particularly as they are always accompanied by a rectosigmoid resection and end-to-end anastomosis with a complication rate and results inferior to rectopexy.

At US\$46.30 an expensive monograph and not one to recommend for individual purchase but perhaps it has a place in units where the operation will be very occasionally undertaken.

P R HAWLEY

Advances in gastrointestinal surgery Edited by J S Najarian and J P Delaney. (Pp. 650; illustrated; £66.50.) Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers, 1984

This is a compilation of articles in which American surgeons discuss problem areas in gastrointestinal surgery with the admixture of the obligatory physician or two and the obligatory European or two. Each batch of up to 10 papers is followed by a panel discussion and to get the flavour of the book each batch should be read together. It is most revealing of the attitudes and opinions of our North American colleagues. The range of topics is wide and well-chosen. The standard of presentation is also wide but uneven: for a book claiming to be a reference source, some of the contributions are rather superficial. Technically, the illustrations are disappointing. While by no means can all the details mentioned be called advances, the multiple authors have succeeded in providing an interesting 'state of the art' volume which will do well in North America but is overpriced for the United Kingdom and of peripheral interest as an outline of American surgical attitudes in this discipline.

H L DUTHIE

News

Sir Christopher Booth

We are pleased to record that Sir Christopher Booth, who was editor of *Gut* from 1975–82 has been nominated for the office of President of the British Medical Association 1986–87.

Retirement Festschrift

A Festschrift is to be held on 23 and 24 September 1985 to honour the retirement of Dr W Sircus and Mr W P Small. Further details from Dr Martin Eastwood, Wolfson Laboratories, G1 Unit, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh EH4 2XU.

World Congress of Gastroenterology

On 7–12 September 1986 São Paulo, Brazil will host the 8th World Congress of Gastroenterology, the 6th World Congress of Digestive Endoscopy, and the 3rd World Congress of Coloproctology. Further information from Congrex do Brazil, Rua Ouvidor, 60/614, 20030 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil.

Progress in the Pathophysiology and Treatment of Gastric and Duodenal Ulcers

An international symposium on the above will take place from 1–6 October 1985 in Felix-Oradea in Romania. Further details from Dr I Pușcaș, 4775 Simleu Silvaniei, Hospital Simleu Silvaniei, Department of Gastroenterology, Str Dunării, Romania.

9th World Congress of the Collegium Internationale Chirurgiae Digestivae (CICD)

This congress will be held in Jerusalem, Israel, from 31 August to 5 September 1986. Further information from The Secretariat, 9th CICD Congress, POB 983, 91009 Jerusalem, Israel.

5th Biennial Scientific Meeting of the Asian-Pacific Association for the Study of the Liver

Singapore will be hosting this meeting which will be held from 8–11 January 1986 at the Shangri-La Hotel. Further details from the Secretariat, APASL 1986, Academy of Medicine, 4-A College Road, Singapore 0316.

10th International Hepatic Update 1985

To be held at the Royal Free Hospital, London, from 18–20 July 1985. Details from Professor Neil McIntyre, The Royal Free Hospital, Pond Street, London NW3 2QG.