in interpreting results are outlined from the endoscopist's point of view. This is well worth reading if the reader is planning to participate in a clinical trial.

The volume starts with a detailed account of the video endoscope describing the mechanism of light sensitivity, of the chip at the tip of the instrument and the methodologies used to convert that into an image. It is well worth reading – although of little practical value!

There are five chapters involving ERCP and these are apparently scattered in random order. There is as mentioned, an overlap, but the review by Venu and Geenan on diseases of the papilla is particularly useful. The chapter on upper gastrointestinal haemorrhage is unfortunately rather weak being superficial in its treatment of several aspects. No doubt space limited the reviewer's ability to make the chapter comprehensive, but treatment of bleeding varices is particularly limited, and the use of the laser in GI haemorrhage largely confined to the author's experience and is very incomplete in assessment of the literature. There is a superbly illustrated chapter on the use of dyes and magnifying endoscopes for early cancer detection. The patience and time needed for the limited return is considerable though. This book is to be recommended to practising endoscopists – it does help to update and in a practical way.

D G COLIN-JONES

Recent advances in gastroenterology Edited by R E Pounder. (Pp. 367; illustrated; £35.) Edinburgh: Churchill Livingstone, 1986.

Recent advances in gastroenterology has been a successful series. The editor of this edition, Roy Pounder, has reverted to the scheme of selecting topics of current interest, ranging from duodenal biochemistry and small gut permeability, to abdominal computed tomography and food intolerance. This makes it an interesting browsing book for the professional gastroenterologist rather than a broad update for the trainee or generalist. A fifth of the book is devoted to gastroduodenal disease, reflecting the interests of the editor and the presence of a pharmaceutical company's imprimatur on the dustcover.

Every chapter is sound, authoritative, and balanced. At first sight the chapters on paediatric, gay and veterinary gastroenterology might seem like peripheral reading, for purposes of curiosity only, to most 'main-line' gastroenterologists, but the three well written contributions make it clear that any of us may find ourselves dealing with an infant or a homosexual and, if not an animal, then at least diseases related to veterinary ones. Gut microbiology

seems to be better studied and understood in animals than in *homo sapiens*.

Every chapter is heavily referenced but a novel and welcome addition is a comprehensive and well indexed list of reviews and leading articles published in 1983 and 1984.

A good read for every gastroenterologist.

J R BENNETT

The enteric nervous system By J B Furness and M Costa. (Pp. 290; illustrated; £45.) Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York: Churchill Livingstone, 1987.

This book summarises the current state of knowledge about the intrinsic innervation of the mammalian alimentary canal. It consists of 10 chapters on various aspects of the enteric nervous system including the basic anatomy, neurochemistry, electrophysiology, control of motility and secretion, and the role of the sympathetic nervous innervation of the gut (not strictly part of the enteric nervous system, but essential for completeness).

Each chapter starts with a brief introductory section that sets the scene, and ends with a useful summary. Recent findings are well surveyed and the book is remarkable for the historical background that is also provided. Time and time again one is struck by the authors' attempt to reconcile what is often conflicting and fragmentary evidence into a unified story (in many cases for the first time). This valuable and brave (if occasionally weighty) attempt betrays the careful thought that has gone into this book. It will no doubt become a standard text for anyone interested in the nervous control of the gut and will be a continual source of reference. For clinical people the book provides an accessible entry to the esoteric world of 'pure research'; this will be essential reading to understand the implications of basic research for future medical and surgical intervention.

S J H BROOKES

Liver disease and gallstones – the facts By Alan G Johnson and David R Triger. (Pp. 109; illustrated; £7.50.) Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987.

On reading the title and seeing the size of this book the average postgraduate student might have believed that here at last was a small and authoritative text book of hepatology which might help to propel him forward in his chosen career. Unfortunately, despite its authoritative title it is in fact intended to be read by patients and their relatives, and it is one of a series of nearly 30 books on a variety of medical topics, all produced for the same consumer group.

The volume is written by two academic gastro-

enterologists, one a surgeon, the other a physician, and both with a special expertise of hepatology. Within its 105 pages there are short chapters on methods of investigation of liver disease, gall stones, jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis, alcoholic liver disease, cancer, etc, and there are more specialised sections on tropical liver disease, the complications of liver disease and liver transplantation. The style is uncomplicated, the information and advice given is sensible, and although many lay readers might have difficulty in following some parts of the text there are simple line drawings to help with the anatomy and a series of black and white photographs of various aspects of clinical liver disease. One or two of the latter might have a salutary effect on any intending alcoholics!

Whilst aimed at the educated lay reader, one cannot but help comment on how much factual information has been squeezed into such a small space, and that nurses and perhaps the occasional undergraduate medical student would also benefit from seeing this book. As an exercise in seeing what is expected with regard to good communication with patients it would be useful as there is no doubt that books such as this would not be required if the medical profession's ability to communicate were better.

I cannot see a great market for this small book, but one must congratulate the authors on achieving what they have. I note there is as yet no volume in the series on 'Stomach and intestines: the facts', but I cannot imagine this deficiency (if it is one) will persist for long.

ALAN E READ

Food allergy and intolerance Edited by J Brostoff and S J Challacombe. (Pp. 1032; illustrated; £75.) London: Baillière Tindall, 1987.

By its sheer bulk this book seems to be saying: 'Accept food reactions as a serious scientific discipline or else...' Indeed, when 83 respected authors write 61 well referenced chapters on a subject one must admit it has come of age. The authors are from a variety of disciplines and countries. Only a handful are gastroenterologists (including R Wright, P Asquith, J Walker-Smith, and J Hunter) and the section on gut diseases is relatively short. It covers comprehensively the expected diseases, however – gluten toxicity, IBS, IBD, and paediatric syndromes of vomiting and diarrhoea. The Cambridge group presents its good results with elimination diets in 77 patients with Crohn's disease (as already published) but Roy Shorter dismisses food allergy as playing no role in IBD. Gastroenterologists who are already familiar with the literature will be none the wiser for reading these chapters, at least in relation to manag-

ing their patients. If they browse through the rest of the book, however, they will learn much about basic mechanisms of gut immunology and food evoked reactions throughout the body. Full cover is given to gut associated lymphocytes and macrophages, to mucosal antibodies, to antigen handling by the gut and to mechanisms of damage to the gut (including non-immune mechanisms). There is also much to be learnt about food itself with big chapters on food families and rotation diets and on the new field of dietary lectins. Non-GI problems are extensively covered, including asthma, eczema, migraine, and the hyperkinetic syndrome. 'What tests should a clinician ask for?' sounded a promising chapter but it was not very helpful. The gold standard is said to be a double blind encapsulated food challenge but we are not told how to do it.

Intriguingly, a Polish professor diagnoses food allergy by dripping food extracts on to the gastric mucosa and watching it redden through an endoscope. Startlingly, he claims that gastric and duodenal ulcers heal with cromoglycate as often as with cimetidine. I was unconvinced, however, by the chapter on subcutaneous food extract injection therapy which is claimed by the American author to help IBS, Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Has he not heard of placebo responses?

Like all big multi-author books this one has suffered from a long production time but it succeeds in its aim of providing encyclopaedic cover of an expanding if still contentious subject. The subject is plagued by pseudoscience (dramatically so in the Dallas 'Environmental Control Unit') but properly controlled trials are being done and, one day, its true place in medicine will become apparent.

K W HEATON

Viral hepatitis: clinics in tropical medicine and communicable diseases Edited by A J Zuckerman. (Pp. 461; illustrated; £17.50.) Philadelphia: W B Saunders, 1986.

The *Clinics Series* published by W B Saunders have for many years provided a ready source of up to date information on growing points in clinical medicine. The present new series, of which this volume on *Viral hepatitis* is the second issue, is directed towards physicians working in the tropics and all those faced with illness in immigrants and returning travellers. An outstanding international group of authors have been selected. The global importance of hepatitis B, its biology, treatment and relationship to hepatocellular carcinoma are fully covered. The chapter by H C Thomas and A M L Lever on treatment is particularly well done, although the use of such drugs as interferon is quite outside the scope of most