

most recent papers surveyed cover 1984–6, the volume is already rapidly becoming dated. The book would be ideal for those wanting to acquire a reasonably current view of progress in the areas described, but does not offer a comprehensive inventory of management or treatment. Its birds' eye approach will satisfy trainees, and even the enthusiastic student, eager for a quick overview on a particular topic, or for a promising line in research.

I thought the symposium proceedings were inappropriately placed in a volume of this kind. Furthermore some of the contributions were appallingly bad and most unsuitable for publication. It was, nevertheless, most enjoyable reading Dr Kirsner on himself and his life's work. His name will surely go down as one of the founding fathers of American gastroenterology and it is his outstanding contribution to gastroenterology, and to inflammatory bowel disease in particular, that we all salute.

MICHAEL N MARSH

**Whipple's disease** by William O. Dobbins III. (Pp. 242; illustrated; \$44.75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles C Thomas, 1987.

There is a long tradition of gastrointestinal research at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where gastroenterologists have made particular contributions to our understanding of malabsorption and disorders of the small intestine. It is therefore wholly appropriate that one of the University's faculty members, William O Dobbins III, Professor of Internal Medicine at the Veterans Administration Medical Center, should have produced a monograph on Whipple's disease. The author is particularly well placed to undertake this task. He has clearly been fascinated if not obsessed with the disease from his first encounter with a sufferer in 1962 and since that time he has published data on 21 personally observed patients. He has also accumulated unpublished data on 79 other patients, mainly by correspondence, and has studied the published reports of 617 patients in the literature. The book, which is dedicated to George Hoyt Whipple who first described the disease in 1907, represents a detailed analysis of these patients, 696 in all. There is an introduction and historical survey and the monograph continues with an interesting section on epidemiology. Aetiology, pathogenesis, immunology, and immunopathology are carefully considered, and there is a general description of the clinical and pathological features and the differential diagnosis. Those faced with the problem of treating an individual patient will find much to help them in the chapter on treatment and prognosis. It would be heartening to be able to report that this exhaustive analysis of patients with

Whipple's disease has led to new insights into the pathogenesis of the condition. Sadly that is not the case and we remain today as uncertain as to the nature of the organisms that are found in the intestinal mucosa, lymph nodes and elsewhere as when Whipple originally observed bacillary bodies down the microscope. Nevertheless, this monograph will be a valuable addition to the shelf of any practising gastroenterologist and it should be available in the libraries of Medical Schools and Postgraduate Medical Centres. At \$44.74 for little more than 150 pages of effective text, the book is not cheap. The illustrations, however, are excellent and there are more than 50 more pages of appendices and bibliography. Sadly, the proof reading is not up to the standard expected from a distinguished publishing house such as Charles C Thomas.

C C BOOTH

**Radiology of the liver, biliary tract, pancreas and spleen** Edited by Arnold C Friedman. (Pp. 1110; illustrated; £110.) Baltimore, London, Los Angeles, Sydney: Williams & Wilkins, 1987.

This excellent textbook of radiology forms one in the Golden Series of Diagnostic Radiology textbooks, John H Harris being the overall editor of the series. Arnold Friedman, who edits this volume, comes from Philadelphia. This textbook truly represents an authoritative source of information for all those who are interested in diagnosis in the liver, the biliary tract, pancreas and spleen. The book is divided into five separate sections. The first one deals comprehensively with all problems within the liver, ranging from congenital abnormalities to magnetic resonance imaging. There are included a wide variation of topics from the common to the rare, and indeed it is very comprehensive.

The second section describes disorders and abnormalities in the gall bladder and biliary tract, including a separate chapter at the end of interventional biliary radiology. Similarly, the next section describes the pancreas in great detail. There is a particularly long and helpful chapter on pancreatic neoplasms. The spleen in the next section is well covered. The final section deals with biopsy and drainage procedures in the upper abdomen, the chapter in this section being drainage of abscesses and fluid collection, whilst the second chapter deals with the important details about guided percutaneous biopsy in the upper abdomen.

The text is full, clear, and most of the illustrations are excellent. In particular, the ultrasound and CT are clear, well annotated and of very good quality. In contrast, angiography plays a relatively small role as far as illustrations are concerned. The references are

given at the end of each subsection, which is very helpful when reading. I can fully recommend this excellent textbook, which presents a state-of-the-art picture of radiology today as practised, particularly in the North American continent. It should be in the library of every large diagnostic radiology department.

HEATHER B NUNNERLEY

**1986 Yearbook of digestive diseases** Edited by N J Greenberger and F G Moody. (Pp. 471; illustrated; £41.00.) Chicago and London: Year Book Medical Publishers Inc, 1986.

When I encountered the *Year book of digestive diseases* for the first time last year, I was favourably impressed, and my comments were recorded in these columns. Before opening the successor volume, I wondered whether further acquaintance with the joint work of Drs Greenberger and Moody might temper my enthusiasm. In the event, not so. The editors have again selected 250 papers out of a total of the 10000 that they reviewed. Each paper is presented in summary form, and accompanied by an editorial comment; in many cases, key Figures or Tables are also included. The selection covers the entire range of gastroenterology (including hepatology) and spans the world literature. There is an understandable American bias in the selection of topics; surgery for morbid obesity, duodenal ulcer, and gastro-oesophageal reflux as well as nutrition perhaps receive more attention than might be the case in a European selection, but the difference is unimportant. What is important is the scholarship involved as exemplified by the concise, critical and constructive comments of the authors. One slight cause for concern is that although each section starts with a chapter on 'Physiology or pathophysiology', no papers published in physiological journals have been included. Does this mean that the authors did not read any such journals? Or does it mean that papers in physiological journals lack clinical relevance? If, as I suspect, the latter is the case, this is a worrying trend.

The publishers have produced a well made book with good print quality and excellent layout, but there is no denying that it is expensive. Is it a luxury item? I think not. It allows the busy gastroenterologist to keep up with the specialty on a broad front. Because it deals only with what is new, the reader is not buying – as he would with a new edition of a textbook – a lot of material with which he is already familiar. The combination of a physician and a surgeon as editors not only acknowledges the fusion of the two disciplines within the one specialty but also broadens the appeal of the book. I recall (possibly

incorrectly) reading a book by Patrick Campbell entitled 'A short trot with a cultured mind'. This book is a short trot with two cultured minds, and as such an exercise should be, it is informative and invigorating.

DAVID WINGATE

## News

### **Digestive Disease Week, New Orleans 1988: AGA/GRG Basic Science Short Course**

A one day didactic course on neural mechanisms in the gastrointestinal tract will be held during DDW on 14 May 1988. For further information, contact Charles Slack Inc, Executive Secretary, American Gastroenterological Association, Thorofare, New Jersey 08086, USA.

### **Reduced subscription for trainees**

*Gut* is available at a reduced rate of £48 per annum to bona fide trainees in gastroenterology in the areas of basic science, medicine, surgery, pathology or radiology. The reduced subscription rate will be available for one year in the first instance and a fresh application will be needed for any subsequent year, up to a total of three years. The offer does not apply to members of the BSG. Trainees should be of registrar or senior registrar status, or equivalent. Application forms are available from The Subscription Dept, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JR. (Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.)