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 inven-
tory of management or treatment. Its birds’ eye
approach will satisfy trainees, and even the enthu-
siastic student, eager for a quick overview on a
particular topic, or for a promising line in research.

I thought the symposium proceedings were in-
appropriately placed in a volume of this kind.
Furthermore some of the contributions were appal-
lingly 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 inflam-
matory bowel disease in particular, that we all salute.

MICHAEL N MARSH

242; illustrated; $44-75.) Springfield, Illinois: Charles

There is a long tradition of gastrointestinal research
at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where
gastroenterologists have made particular contrib-
utions 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 He has also accumulated unpublished data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,

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 comprehen-
sively 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 inter-
ventional 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


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 selfaddressed, stamped envelope.)