Instructional course lectures. Edited by *Dempsey S. Springfield*. Rosemont, Illinois: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 1997. ISBN: 0-89203-161-1. £102.00

This, the 40th volume of the series, covers the following important subjects with the customary style, skill and authority: trauma to a glenohumeral joint, minimally invasive surgery to the spine, arthroplasty of the knee, fractures of the tibia and the ankle, osteoporosis, growth factors and amputations. It deserves the usual recommendation, contributing to essential instruction.

Michael Laurence.

Arthrogryposis: a text atlas. Edited by *Lynn T. Staheli, Judith G. Hall, Kenneth M. Jaffe and Diane O. Paholke*. Pp 178. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. ISBN: 0-521-57106-5. £55.00.

The concept of providing a text liberally illustrated in the form of an atlas is one which Staheli has used very successfully in the past in his delightful and informative *Atlas of paediatric orthopaedics*. To use this approach for a book on arthrogryposis is an interesting idea. The book is aimed at all health-care professionals, parents and patients and includes a parent amongst the editors. It provides much information on this often poorly understood condition.

The first chapter deals with the problem of diagnosis. Dr Hall, who is an acknowledged expert on the subject, gives a broad view of the, at least 150, possible causes, breaking them down into three major subgroupings. The book then concentrates on the management of the classical, mainly limb type of arthrogryposis, or to use its old name, amyoplasia congenita. Affliction of the upper and lower limbs is dealt with separately, with useful detail of the medial approach to the dislocated hip, which was pioneered by Staheli and has been giving very good results.

Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and orthotics have a great part to play in the management of these children. The role of the expert in these fields as both educator and facilitator for the child and the family is rightly emphasised. The difficulty for the family in coming to terms with the birth of a child with arthrogryposis and then dealing with the varying problems of their disability during life is emphasised and treated sympathetically. A multidisciplinary approach and, if possible, a special clinic where the various skills are available to allow the child as a whole to be looked after, are of priceless value.

Arthrogryposis can be intimidating both for those who suffer from it and for those responsible for the care of such patients. I can thoroughly recommend this book to anyone who comes in contact with a child with the condition in any form. They will be wiser having read it and by buying it will contribute to further research on the subject, as stated in the preface.

John Fixsen.

Surgical disorders of the peripheral nerves. By *R. Birch, G. W. L. Bonney and C. B. Wynn Parry*. Pp 450. London: Churchill Livingstone, 1998. ISBN: 0-443-04443-0. £95.00

Once in a while there arrives on the editorial desk a work of such erudition and scholarship, on a subject of such importance, as to demand more than the usual appreciation and recommendation. This book provides not only an education into the vital system of musculoskeletal physiology but a lesson on how to hold the reader's attention with a sense of excitement.

Rowley Bristow was once quoted as instructing the trainee orthopaedic surgeon to follow his incision down to the bone as quickly as possible and to be sure to remain there. Safe advice for some, but it reveals a hint of fear and a tendency to ignore the soft tissues. Soft indeed! The very word suggests the insubstantial, wet and unimportant; but caution the fact, too often learned the hard way, that damage to nerves, either by disease or misadventure, totally destroys the function of a limb.

In this treatise, a sequel to the first work of that title by Seddon but now completely rewritten, the authors present basic science, pathology and management in a way that is transparently clear and logical, and everywhere with sympathy for both doctor and patient.

We are in the age of evidence-based medicine. This book will satisfy those who seek the evidence of experience, but it is not unmindful of the fact that the clinician constantly faces problems for which there is no hard evidence as to which is the best line of treatment. Every clinical case of any complexity will contain unique features, for the management of which there is no precedent. The authors of this book illustrate in clear narrative form an array of clinical situations and describe the principles, both logical and biological, by which the surgeon will make sound judgements and act.

Early chapters cover basic science including the latest research on ultramicroscopy; this is not only for the pathophysiologist but equally for the surgeon, who must acquire a feeling for the intricately delicate yet vigorous forces at work for repair and recovery. If the surgeon can produce the optimum microclimate, nature will do the work.

Chapter 6, on Clinical Aspects, addresses the diagnosis and information about a number of relevant medical conditions, including rheumatoid arthritis, neoplasia and diabetes. Chapter 7, on Surgical Techniques, covers the general and regional. This is extensile work not given much to keyhole routes. Penetrating wounds and those from high-velocity missiles are discussed in Chapter 8 which emphasises the need for collaboration, particularly with vascular and plastic surgeons.

Chapter 9 is devoted to the brachial plexus, the subject which the surgical authors have made their own. They call for speed of investigation rather than an ostrich-like hope that neuropraxia may recover. In the frank division or avulsion of a substantial proximal nerve there is a race against time, repair against strangulating cicatrization. The difficulties of the orientation of fibres and the mix of modalities are addressed, together with the management of agonising pain. Finally, ingenuity is displayed in the choice of salvage procedures by transposition, transplantation of individual parts or whole blocks of vascularised tissue and the stabilisation and arthrodesis of joints.

Chapter 12 addresses the more common ground of nerve entrapment. The extensive literature on the subject is well summarised and the debate on the thoracic-outlet syndrome is

presented with emphasis upon precise neurological and occasionally vascular clinical signs. Similarly, the merits of ulnar transposition or decompression receive a balanced judgement. The carpal tunnel syndrome has an interesting history and a dangerous future. Is there any justification for converting a ten-minute operation with a 3 cm incision into a 40-minute procedure with three 1 cm incisions, carrying a 10% chance of damage to the nerve in its tight tunnel? There must be easier ways of justifying the acquisition of an arthroscope or a research grant. Would not a single case of nerve damage be the subject of legal action after an open operation on the wrist? The authors make this point powerfully without closing the door on technical developments in the future. Chapter 14 covers Iatrogenic Injury - a rich source of salutary stories with wise warnings about clamps, levers, blind procedures and the potential of cement to 'cook'. Far from being the late 'fill up' for the sake of completion, the chapters on Recovery and Rehabilitation convince the reader of their importance in management.

There are many illustrative case reports, told with a mixture of the cynicism of a legal advocate and the curiosity and observation of a Hunter brother. The whole reads like a historical novel and will be hard to put down even by those not interested in the subject - can there be any? Not only will this book be prized by all who practise orthopaedic surgery but it is a great piece of medical literature.

Michael Laurence.

AO/ASIF principles in spine surgery. Edited by *M. Aebi, J. S. Thalgott and J. K. Webb*. Pp 243. Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1998. ISBN: 3-540-62763-4. \$189.00.

This technical manual is a natural development to cover the spinal components of the previous general AO manual. It includes chapters on the basic principles of spinal fixation, the biology of spinal fusion and the classification of spinal fractures.

The AO classification of thoracic and lumbar spine fractures is becoming the most widely accepted classification in clinical use and as with the classification of fractures of the long bones has particular relevance for researchers in this field. The general chapters are well balanced and will appeal to general orthopaedic and spinal surgeons alike. The specialist chapters deal predominantly with the techniques of insertion of instrumentation developed by the AO group and in this respect will be of interest to a much more limited audience. The instrumentation and mechanical details are very specific to the AO group, but the general principles of, for example, lateral mass screws in the cervical spine or pedicle screws in the thoracolumbar region, are the same for all implants.

This is an important new addition from the AO stable of technical manuals and should find itself on the bookshelf of specialist spinal surgeons.

John O'Dowd.

Joint replacement in the shoulder and elbow. Edited by *W. A. Wallace*. Pp 165. Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 1998. ISBN: 0-7506-1367-X. £65.00.

The small number of surgeons who undertake these demanding procedures will certainly want to read this book. Relatively compact, it goes right to the point and is laid out neatly and logically. The development of this 'Cinderella' specialty has

occurred in the last few decades and most of the original practitioners are still in the field. It is to the next generation of specialists that this book will be most interesting since the earlier surgeons either genuinely know it all, or are beyond teaching, or both.

The introductory chapters tend to overlap but most of us will find them fascinating and even amusing. They will be used, I imagine, mostly as reference sources for future papers, since much of the ancient lore on joint replacement in the upper limb is difficult to find. Some chapters are bedevilled by the problem common to all such didactic works - how much of the information is of the generally accepted body of information available, and how much is simply the author's fancy? I am afraid that the careful reader will be disappointed in this respect, and the careless will be misled.

The 'how-to-do-it chapters' repeat the surgical details available elsewhere but will be read for information by trainees and for confirmation by the trained. The most difficult of operations, the revision replacement, is well discussed, both for the shoulder and the elbow. I would warn the inexperienced, however, from being beguiled: the procedures are often not as successful as sometimes implied and some should be defined as 'salvage'.

I was disappointed not to see a chapter on the use of prostheses for tumours or trauma - the former rare, the latter common. The specialist surgeon is asked to deal with these from time to time, and there is a literature on both subjects. A balanced review would have been very useful.

M. S. Watson.

Osteoporosis. A clinical guide. 2nd edition. Edited by *Anthony Wolt and Allan St John Dixon*. Pp 242. London: Martin Dunitz Ltd, 1998. ISBN: 1-85317-246-4. £49.95.

Much of everyday practice involves the treatment of osteoporotic patients, either for common fractures or backache. Despite this familiar contact osteoporosis has been neglected as a disease by many orthopaedic surgeons, possibly because they are mechanically minded and concentrate on the broken bone. There has been much progress since the clarification of postmenopausal osteoporosis by Albright in 1941. Measurement of bone density has been simplified and options for treatment defined. The importance of exercise with impact loading has been recognised. Occurrence in subgroups, such as the athlete with amenorrhoea and in males, is now recognised.

This slim, well-illustrated volume has been written by two rheumatologists. The text is clear, comprehensive and not intensively technical. Practical points are stressed in a separate section at the end of some chapters.

Fractures in the middle-aged and elderly constitute an enormous medical and social problem which could be preventable but are increasing. It is now good practice to send postmenopausal patients with fractures of cancellous bone (e.g. Colles' and the humeral neck) for bone densitometry and an opinion from a medical specialist. Careful study of this book will provide a thorough grasp of the subject and is recommended reading for all those who are ignorant of this important disorder of bone.

Leslie Klenerman.

Books received

Cross-reference for orthopaedic surgery. Pp 640. Rosemont, Illinois: American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons, 1998. ISBN: 89203-207-3. \$79.95.