Book reviews

Hand pearls. By *Matthew J. Concannon* and *Jack Hurov*. Pp 245. Hagerstown: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2001. ISBN: 1-56033-463-X. \$245.00.

This collection of anecdotes relating to typical clinical problems follows the case books of the past. Such experience is the foundation of sound surgical practice and these reports will sharpen the observational skills of all who enjoy clinical detection. Observational skills should already be sharp enough for those reading page 7, which describes a patient with a symptom in the right hand, above which is clearly a photograph of the left!

There are brilliant colour photographs at the beginning of the book, but all subsequent illustrations, which are the essence of the work, are in black-and-white and not at all so clear. The style is useful for those about to embark upon specialist examinations for higher degrees and indeed for the practice of hand surgery, but I fear that the illustrations are not good enough without colour.

Michael Laurence

Tachdjian's paediatric orthopaedics. Vols 1 to 3. 3rd edition. Edited by *J. A. Herring*. Pp 2438. Philadelphia, etc: W. B. Saunders Company, 2002. ISBN: 0-7216-5882-X. £220.00.

This new edition has been eagerly awaited. It follows the previous outstanding contributions which the late Dr Mihran Tachdjian achieved in the earlier editions of his book in 1971 and 1990. It is interesting how it has been changed. It is now almost impossible for a single author to achieve the aims of an authoritative textbook on paediatric orthopaedics and therefore it is appropriate that the new edition should be multiauthored. These writers, however, are entirely from within the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, but no chapter has an individual reference author. The question must be asked therefore whether this alteration has achieved the aims of the single author by being by a single department.

This edition has been produced 12 years after the last and has been brought up to date. The primary chapters on growth and development, orthopaedic history and examination have been rewritten, but use many of the original drawings. There are new chapters on the limping child, back pain, anaesthesia and imaging techniques. The chapter on the limping child is particularly useful for the medical student, trainee and the consultant colleague. However, in his introduction, the editor states that "Our reference lists are shorter than in previous editions, as many older references and many non-English references have been omitted. For the historian, these are available in previous editions of this text". I am not in

complete agreement with this since it means that the book is moving to becoming more and more North American, not to say Texan, in its view. Although it will sell well in North America, it may not do so outside that continent. Readers tend to look for their local references and if they do not find them they may feel that this book does not reflect world opinion, which is a requirement of a text such as this.

There has been much interest recently in child abuse and non-accidental injury as reflected in most of the textbooks on children's orthopaedics. I am sure that this is just as important in North America. The sections in this book dealing with the subject are short. There are no illustrations particularly related to examination and the types of soft-tissue injury seen in so many of these unfortunate victims. It is also curious that femoral anteversion and deformities in the lower limb are considered in separate chapters and yet, from a clinical point of view, are intimately related. The illustration of femoral anteversion is a good example of external tibial torsion and not of the femoral anteversion which it is trying to describe. The author may have been confused on this point. The operative drawings remain excellent, but I think that few have been added to the excellent descriptions of technique from the previous volume.

However, this remains an essential textbook of paediatric orthopaedics and has been well brought up to date by the staff at the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas. The editor must be congratulated on achieving a remarkable outcome to a very difficult project and the book itself, although having its deficiencies, must be looked on as a significant contribution to the subject.

A. Catterall

Bone in clinical orthopaedics. Edited by *Geoff Sumner-Smith*. Pp 492. Dübendorf: AO Publishing, 2002. ISBN: 3-13-125721-0. €159.00.

In the preface to this new edition of *Bone in clinical orthopaedics* the editor describes the target audience as new graduates entering the professions of human, dental, or veterinary orthopaedics. Does it fulfil the requirements of this group? The book is organised into 15 chapters covering the normal development and function of bone, the response to trauma and its complications, and detailed considerations of the biological 'basis' for and response to treatment. The chapters vary in structure and content ranging from concise overviews to in-depth presentations containing detailed research, as in the important chapter on blood supply to bone. Much of the research presented is from veterinary studies reflecting the importance of this field to our understanding of bone. There is an emphasis on trauma with little elective surgery or the impact of metabolic bone disease on orthopaedics, but this should not deter anyone from obtaining this volume. There is an admirable inclusion of information from older, seminal literature which is often lost in more recent texts.

The layout of the book is pleasing and the text is generously supplemented by diagrams, radiographs and micrographs. A novel feature is the inclusion of a website address giving online links to the abstracts of most of the articles in the bibliographies, which

provides a useful starting point for further study. There is also a limited but useful glossary. The book then provides a wealth of information on bone which underpins evidence-based orthopaedic surgery and is also a primer for further research. The answer to the question raised at the beginning of this review then is "yes", but the book is of value not just to trainee orthopaedic surgeons but also to more experienced practitioners and to anyone carrying out orthopaedic research.

A. Brooks

Lister's "the hand": diagnosis and indications. 4th edition. Edited by Paul Smith. Pp 554. London, etc: Churchill Livingstone, 2002. ISBN: 0443064164. £99.00.

The authors of this book are plastic surgeons and therefore may not be known to readers of this journal. Graham Lister is a Scot, but no relation to Joseph, who, after completing his training in Glasgow, emigrated to the centre in Louisville, Kentucky, which under Harold Kleinert became the foremost in the world for hand surgery during the 1970s and 1980s. Lister is an outstanding teacher, who became the second Briton after Adrian Flatt, to be chosen as President of the American Society of the Hand. Although this book was first published in 1977, while the author was working in the USA, he states in the foreword that it was inspired by the late Athol Parkes of Glasgow.

The book was an immediate success and required second and third editions, each larger than its predecessor. Dr Lister has now retired to Florida and, believing that "few of us improve in our academic efforts once we enter our sixties," he has passed the book on to Paul Smith, a plastic surgeon specialising in the hand at Mount Vernon Hospital and Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children, London. He has undertaken the difficult task of producing a fourth edition with skill and much width and depth of knowledge. Lister, in a new foreword, says that on reading it his "pleasure was akin to that of encountering an old friend who has had a skilled and imperceptible facelift. She looks much the same as before, yet somehow refreshed and rejuvenated".

The book has grown with each edition and this fourth edition is twice the size of the first. In a way this is a pity, because it can no longer be used as an introduction to hand surgery. It is, however, now a comprehensive textbook the subject matter of which, as specified in the subtitle, makes it the perfect complement to *Green's operative hand surgery*, or perhaps I should say Green is a perfect complement to Lister since the latter appeared five years earlier.

Orthopaedic surgeons have long since abandoned the affectation that they can learn nothing from a book by plastic surgeons. The chapter on rheumatoid arthritis and its variants is a good example. I did not know that compression of the spinal cord by atlantoaxial subluxation produces diminished sensation in the area of the ophthalmic division of the trigeminal nerve on the forehead and hyper-reflexia in the lower limbs.

The long chapter on injury is extremely good, stressing the facts needed at each stage of the assessment, which continues into the operation. It was encouraging to read that patients with severe injuries are "reassured if there is present one whose thin and greying hair and facial wrinkles suggest experience and knowledge to a degree which cannot be conveyed by the best-educated but fresh-faced resident or registrar".

Mr Smith's exceptional experience with congenital abnormalities is reflected in that chapter. Lister says that the "most striking is the elevation of quality in the text devoted to congenital disorders".

The final chapter, a welcome addition to the book, is on Dupuytren's disease. This diagnosis is usually obvious, but to record it in detail for comparison with future examinations is not so easy. Smith makes the interesting point that here again "diagnosis is a process which continues intra-operatively. The effect of each operative manoeuvre needs to be observed and if correction is not achieved the next logical step must be instituted".

The book is copiously illustrated in black-and-white and has a superb collection of references, now helpfully arranged under topics and subtopics. It is worth having for these alone, but all serious students of hand surgery should read it from cover to cover.

Nicholas Barton

Functional fracture bracing: a manual. By Augusto Sarmiento and Loren Latta. Pp 200. Philadelphia, etc: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2002. ISBN: 0-7817-3729-X. \$79.95.

Sarmiento and Latta have produced a new text on a topic with which their names are inextricably linked. On this occasion they describe their new book as a "manual". In contrast to some of their earlier publications it is laudably concise and provides many practical hints and tips. They make the point that there is still an important place for non-operative treatment in the management of fractures. Much of their book is concentrated on the upper limb, particularly the humerus, and to a less degree on the forearm. Predictably, there is a considerable section on tibial bracing.

One or two of the sections are particularly valuable in that they provide basic guidelines not only for physicians, but also for patients, and certainly it is very helpful to have their perspective on this. The book is well referenced and reflects the fact that there is not much in the modern literature which deals with non-operative treatment.

The philosophy and text nicely synthesise the authors' philosophies which have been carefully worked through and supported by good scientific evidence over a long period of time. It is an excellent summary for trainees; an evening or two spent with this text would be highly appropriate and constructive.

The major disappointment is the illustrations and the techniques described which are those of 15 or 20 years ago in terms of materials with some quite challenging usage of thermoplastics. They cover the area of preformed bracing, but the utilisation of some of the modern casting materials of the tape type does not seem to be acknowledged at all. The illustrations are notably old, although they are clear.

In summary, this book is useful to have on library shelves. It is the best short guide which I have seen, but it does not inspire the young tyro to further his or her knowledge on this subject. Certainly, as our understanding of biological healing continues to improve, we hope that more subtle techniques than open reduction and internal fixation will return. Both authors are to be applauded for sticking to their principles over the years and not compromising at a time when commercial pressure to 'fix' everything is almost overwhelming.

David I. Rowley