Book reviews

The elbow. Master techniques in orthopaedic surgery. 2nd edition. Edited by *Bernard F. Morrey*. Pp 464. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2001. ISBN: 0-7817-1991-7. US \$199.00.

The new edition of this textbook very much lives up to the high standards set by the first edition and by the other monographs in the 'Master techniques' series. A wide range of topics is addressed both in the fields of trauma and elective surgery. Some of the operations are well-established procedures, the text fully reflecting the authors' wide experience with them, while others are less standardised or frankly experimental, for example, the intriguing anconeus slide procedure. The inclusion of surgical frontier techniques contributes in no small way to the stimulating character of the monograph. The emphasis on preoperative planning and postoperative care is to be applauded. The indications and contraindications for the various procedures are clearly listed and succinctly discussed and the very manageable bibliographies at the end of each chapter offer prime suggestions for further reading.

The book is so well illustrated that it has much of the quality of an atlas, the beautiful operative photographs being complemented by excellent and very helpful half-tone drawings. Particularly impressive in this regard are the chapters on exposure, the percutaneous pinning of supracondylar fractures, intra-articular fractures of the distal humerus, articulated external fixators, and the reconstruction of the collateral ligaments. Less successful perhaps are the line drawings in the early pages of the section on arthroscopy and, while the line of reasoning which prompted the adoption of this method of illustration can be appreciated, I feel that the introduction of some shading or even colour would have greatly assisted the reader's interpretation of what otherwise tends to become a plethora of confusing lines. Those surgeons who prefer to operate with the patient in the mid-lateral position and the arm over an elbow rest rather than with the patient supine and the arm across the chest may experience some mild irritation and confusion with the considerable number of illustrations of the latter position which appear to be upside down with respect to their accustomed viewpoint.

Two further minor caveats should be mentioned. First, although a wider range of orthopaedic opinion and practice has been tapped than in the first edition, the text continues to be dominated by the philosophies of management and operative techniques of the Mayo Clinic. This is particularly noticeable in the sections on operative approaches and reconstructive surgery. Secondly, in the Series Preface, the editors "invite us into the operating room to peer over the shoulder of the surgeon at work". This is indeed both fascinating and at the same time a significant limitation of this monograph

which is essentially a very luxurious "How I do it" type of publication with very definite emphasis on the first person. As such it is subject to some extent to the idiosyncrasies of the individual authors both with regard to details of technique and the philosophy of application of specific operations.

For all its fascinating insights and suggestions this text must be regarded as being complementary to, rather than a substitute for, more comprehensive works on operative surgery. Consequently, it may be of more value to the surgeon with personal experience of the various procedures and who is looking for useful tips on circumventing awkward technical hurdles rather than a basic text for the higher surgical trainee.

W. A. Souter

Imaging of the knee – techniques and applications. Edited by *A. M. Davies* and *V. N. Cassar-Pullicino*. Pp 344. Heidelberg etc: Springer-Verlag 2002. ISBN: 3-540-67292-3. £111.50.

The publication of this book is timely, coinciding with the publication of pertinent papers questioning the place of arthroscopy and washout for arthritic knees. One in particular recorded that the need for arthroscopy for suspected meniscal tears can be reduced by 62% by the use of MRI. These papers emphasised the importance of such imaging before surgical intervention and this concise but comprehensive textbook indicates its place and describes the appropriate technique. It is a well-produced book of 340 pages aimed at both radiologists and orthopaedic surgeons who will find it useful and enlightening. The contributors come from all continents for which the editors are to be complimented since this adds variety and interest to the book.

A general section at the beginning describes the available techniques such as radiography, CT, MRI and ultrasound. The remainder addresses the clinical application of each technique to specific pathology. The format follows the standard pathological sieve, starting with congenital abnormality, trauma (including injuries to the menisci and ligaments), infection, arthritis, degenerative conditions and tumours. There is a particularly good section on the patellofemoral joint.

The illustrations in this type of book are its essence and there are beautiful examples of both common pathology and unusual conditions. Clear line drawings complement the imaging pictures.

This is an excellent work which will be very useful for all orthopaedic surgeons and not just those with an interest in the knee.

David Hunt