general surgery, such as trauma, urology and paediatric surgery have not received specialist or detailed treatment, but aspects relevant to general surgery have been included in appropriate chapters. With the special emphasis on the management of trauma and the new ATLS courses that are being sponsored, I would like to have seen a lot more on the general management of trauma and burns.

I particularly enjoyed the chapter entitled 'Preparing the Patient'. This is an extremely important aspect of clinical management and is often not discussed in surgical textbooks. The authors have emphasised that every surgical operation has three important phases: preoperative preparation, the technical procedure in theatre and postoperative care. They have highlighted the importance of the complete clerking and examination of the patient with the relevant investigations and, in addition, given the reader their advice regarding informed consent and what to say to the patient. The two pages on 'explanation to the patient' are absolutely invaluable; how many patient complaints could have been avoided by better communication?

Detailed accounts of technical problems beyond the interest and province of the average student have rightly been omitted, but sometimes there was some imbalance of detail in certain topics. For example, the large number of operations for pilonidal sinuses are outlined, but there is no information given about the treatment of hyperhidrosis with thoracoscopic sympathectomy.

These are minor criticisms, and I think this Handbook of General Surgery is going to become extremely popular with junior medical students, nurses and even more senior surgical trainees, who require a quick revision in preparation for the FRCS examination.

Paul H Rowe
Consultant Surgeon
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This is a most beautiful book which must be 'required reading' for all otologists and otoneurosurgeons. It 'documents a tradition and school of otologic surgical management that has evolved at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Boston' which is presented 'unabashedly' while recognising that there are other surgical alternatives for these otological problems. The senior author, Professor Harold F Schuknecht, will always be recognised as one of the true pioneers of modern ear surgery, and the techniques which he has developed are based on a histological study of his unique collection of human temporal bones.

The first part of the book contains excellent introductory chapters on the examination of the ear including photodocumentation of pathology and one is made aware on the third page that this is truly an American textbook where 'semi-solid surfaces' on which a tuning fork may be struck are identified as patella, elbow, knuckle or hockey puck!

Further chapters on the evaluation of patients are on audiological and vestibular testing and the facial nerve, and a most excellent section on imaging of the temporal bone.

The chapters on surgery of the ear and temporal bone are organised on a 'problem orientated basis' and these begin with soft tissue incisions and approaches, followed by skin grafting and osseous approaches. Separating each operation into its individual parts makes it difficult to follow a procedure through from first incision to final suture, but this method of organisation of the material is at worst only a minor inconvenience and certainly reduces the amount of repetition of the details of 'approach surgery' in the individual chapters.

The full range of otological procedures is described in great detail and the high quality of all the illustrations must be mentioned and congratulations offered to Robert Galla, the medical illustrator.

There are, in addition, chapters on a wide range of otoneuro-surgical procedures, surgery to the facial nerve and cochlear implantation, plus details of reconstruction of the auricle.

The book does, therefore, provide a beautiful detailed description of the full range of surgical procedures on the temporal bone which might be undertaken by a modern otology department. However, as stated in the introduction, it only describes the surgical practice of one outstanding department with little direct reference to alternative techniques, and some modern otologists may disagree with some of the opinions expressed and may consider that some of the procedures which are described are no longer widely practised and may appear a little 'dated'.

This book must, therefore, be required reading for serious otologists who have a wide background knowledge in the subject and who can, therefore, place this volume into context. The otological teaching which has come from the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary is legendary and many surgeons (including the reviewer) have made a pilgrimage to Boston to visit that Unit. Their surgical practice is based on a deep understanding of the pathology of the temporal bone and the acquisition of skills necessary to achieve a successful outcome. This book makes this teaching much more widely available and all otologists will wish to read it and will learn much from its pages.

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This is a beautiful book. Originally published in German in 1990 it has been revised, expanded and translated. Most of the editors and authors are German, others are from Austria, Switzerland and Greece. There is no British or American author. This is reflected in the choice of procedures and in some of the techniques illustrated, but alternative techniques are usually shown.

The editors state in their Preface that 'the act of operation clearly dominates the world of surgery' and that their aim is to focus on the individual steps of classical surgical procedures, presenting them in the order in which they are performed, with details of each technique in a form which is easily applied in practice. In this they have definitely succeeded.

The book is divided into four sections: endoscopic procedures, gallbladder and bile ducts, laparoscopic surgical procedures and, lastly, pancreas. Each section opens with an overview of operative strategy followed by detailed description and illustration of the surgical anatomy and variations that would grace any textbook of pure anatomy. The bulk of each section then considers specific conditions and methods of

The format remains similar to the first edition published in 1986, but the book reflects the changes in our understanding of pathophysiology. For a modest-sized book the coverage is remarkable, a tribute to the two editors and the Irish, British and South African contributors. Following accounts of anatomy, function and diagnostic tests, chapters are devoted to congenital abnormalities, perforations, motility disorders and diverticula. Hiatal hernia and gastro-oesophageal reflux, including Barrett's oesophagus, are well covered, followed by 237 references. Corrosive and non-reflux oesophagitis, and benign strictures are dealt with and there is a new chapter, by Dr Z Popovici of Bucharest, on pharyngo-oesophageal reconstruction.

Neoplasms rightly claim 150 pages, illustrated with clear diagrams but not so clear photographs. Most techniques are covered, including Skinner's 'en bloc' resection, 'blunt' oesophagectomy, and minimal access techniques. I think insufficient account has been taken of the outstanding Japanese work, particularly of Akiyama, in scrupulous dissection of the nodes that has produced results that are difficult or impossible to match elsewhere.

All in all, though, this well-written book offers good value and sound advice.

R M Kirk