BOOK REVIEWS


This is the 13th edition of General Ophthalmology, which was first published in 1958. It is the most comprehensive ophthalmology textbook available. It is written in a style that is easy to read and to follow. The authors have covered a vast range of topics in this book, from anatomy and physiology to clinical medicine. The book is divided into 30 chapters, each of which is written by a different author.

The sections on visual system and vision, on the ocular patterns and visual fields, on the ocular examination, and on the therapeutic corneal and ocular injection are particularly well written. The section on the ocular conditions of special interest and the section on the ocular disorders and pathological processes are also very good.

The authors have written this book in a way that is easy to follow and understand. The book is well-organized and the sections are clearly defined. The authors have also included references to other books and articles, which makes this book an excellent resource for students and clinicians alike.

The book is a must-read for anyone interested in ophthalmology. It is a comprehensive and up-to-date resource that is sure to help students and clinicians alike.

F D GREEN


This new edition of the book which arose following an international corneal and eye-banking meeting in 1985 has been updated extensively. Despite these origins, the authorship is essentially American and little concession is made to international ophthalmology. The authorship is extensive with over 150 names cited, there is an index of individuals at the forefront of corneal surgery but inevitably with such a large ensemble there are inequalities.

The book is divided into five sections: concepts of corneal function; penetrating keratoplasty; refractive surgery; and eye-banking, medical and administrative aspects. Because of the book’s origins, these sections are perhaps inevitable but I believe they are responsible for the imbalance which is displayed and ultimately responsible for its major flaws. Over 25% of the book is devoted to eye-banking but only 10 pages are used to discuss surgery for ocular surface disease. It is the surgery of pterygium. An excessive amount of space is devoted to the administrative aspects of eye-banking. This seems especially irrelevant when there are so many inaccuracies, such as the chapter on international supply of corneal tissue which presents a very distorted view of eye-banking in the United Kingdom. In spite of the considerable space allocation to corneal donation, there is a serious lack of references for the reader to probe deeply enough the most vital questions of the real role of tissue matching and the use of major immunosuppression in corneal transplantation.

The first section, devoted to concepts of corneal function relevant to surgery, is excellent and worthy of inclusion in any corneal textbook. These chapters are lucidly written and are a valuable adjunct to the understanding of the mechanisms of repair.

The section on penetrating keratoplasty is much more satisfying. The sections is relatively short and several of the authors could have benefited from a chapter on the assessment of the success of keratoplasty and promoting the understanding of statistical techniques especially actuarial survival of grafts which (sadly) was notably absent from much of this book. This criticism especially applies to the chapter ‘Indications and contraindications’ which is whimsical in parts and downright inaccurate in others. It seems to ignore a vast body of literature and makes meaningless statements such as ‘One can get a clear graft more than 90% of the time . . . .’ Yes! but for how long – 2 weeks, 2 years, or 20 years? Do the authors not know that graft survival is a dynamic function?

The basic technique of keratoplasty, in my view, is worthy of a far more detailed discussion highlighting areas of agreement and controversy. This would not only assist the reader but help resolve many of the questions that a less experienced surgeon might have. Some of the chapters were practical and helpful – for example, that dealing with suture removal, others (left unidentified to protect the guilty) seem to have been produced as an exercise in essay writing by individuals with no special expertise in or insight into the problem under consideration.

The appendix is just too brief. Surely the excellent dissertation on lamellar grafting deserved more than seven pages. Does this reflect the lack of experience of this type of surgery in the United States or does it reflect a lack of appreciation of the technique? In either case, the book should have been used to educate and encourage.

There is a lack of uniformity of approach in the book, perhaps unavoidable when so many authors are involved, but the effect is irritating and in some cases confusing. Some chapters are excellent reviews of their subject, some an idiosyncratic approach with token reference to literature other than that cited in the text. Some sections are less comprehensive. In either case, the book should have been used to educate and encourage.

As I believe it is necessary in such a major work, the section on the general is considered at length including some highly experimental and, in some cases, abandoned procedures. This may relate to the delay in getting such a major work into production, and may also explain some inaccuracies in terminology for example, HTLV rather than HIV.

There is much to be gained from this book but there is also much to be discarded. It is far from perfect but nevertheless it will find a place in most libraries where it deserves to be consulted. It is not a book for the generalist and perhaps the specialists are too pernickety (like me) to gain real satisfaction from it.

COLIN M KIRKNESS


This is the third edition of Bruce Shields’s Textbook of Glaucoma. The main changes from the previous edition have been updating of the literature and a little rearrangement of the chapters.

The book is divided into three sections. Firstly, the section on the basic aspects of glaucoma goes over the fundamental anatomy, physiology, and pathology of glaucoma. The second chapter on the clinical evaluation of the optic nerve head and psychophysical tests. The introduction to visual field testing is acknowledged to be only an overview but in light of the importance of the area of optic nerve head pathology to the management and diagnosis of glaucoma I thought more space could have been devoted to it.

The second part is a comprehensive systematic description of the glaucomas – primary and secondary. This is an excellent section treating the less common secondary glaucomas particularly well perhaps at the expense of primary open angle glaucoma and its variants which are dealt with relatively briefly.

The final section covers the treatment modalities available in glaucoma, medical, surgical, and laser.

This book is well written and, with only one author, has a continuity of style. The references are extensive but the black and white photographs are of disappointing quality. It is particularly strong on secondary glaucomas but deals very briefly with the current controversial issues. With a subject as large as glaucoma to be covered in one textbook selection has to be made and Bruce Shields has succeeded in his aim of providing an excellent introduction to the glaucomas. I would recommend this book both to the general ophthalmologist and to those in training.

R S BARTHOLOMEW


This is a relatively slim volume of 116 pages.
and at £110 rather expensive. The expense arises from the necessity of having a large number of colour illustrations (on the odd numbered pages). I understand the publisher’s difficulty, but if I were buying this book I might feel rather aggrieved when most of the facing, even numbered pages are virtually devoid of text.

Completely videoteleradiography is in its infancy and this book will certainly be of interest to many corneal surgeons who may already have purchased a videoteleradioscope (VKS). The authors of this book have considerable experience in interpreting videoeleradioscopic analysis although they, like the rest of us, are still exploring exactly how much information the VKS can give us. Nowhere in the text, however, was there discussion of the rationale for choosing to write about the output of only one VKS system (the Computered Anatomy System) when several others are proprietary and are now seen during the academic year starting 1 October 1994. The award will be equivalent to £2000. The purpose of the award is to enable the successful applicant to gain experience and knowledge in pursuit of a specific project related to glaucoma.

THE GLAUCOMA SOCIETY (UK & EIRE) RESEARCH GRANT
The Glaucoma Society (UK & Eire) research grant, sponsored by the International Glaucoma Association will be available for a research project clinically oriented to glaucoma for 1994. The award will be equivalent to £2500. The grant may be used towards salary or project expenses or for buying equipment.

THE GLAUCOMA SOCIETY (UK & EIRE) RESEARCH AWARD
The Glaucoma Society (UK & Eire) research award, sponsored by Alcon Laboratories will be given in support of a research project related to glaucoma. The award will be equivalent to £2000.

These awards are available to both medical graduates and non-medical scientists resident in the United Kingdom or Eire. They may be held concurrently with other awards.

For further details and application form please contact: Dr S Nagasubramanian, Secretary, The Glaucoma Society (UK & Eire), Glaucoma Unit, Moorfields Eye Hospital, City Road, London EC1V 2PD.

The closing date for applications is 1 June 1994. The successful candidate will be informed by August 1994.

European Society of Traditional Ophthalmology and Traditional Chinese Medicine
The 3rd international symposium of traditional medicine will be held on 12–22 May 1994 in Japan. Further details: Dr J Polletti, Société Européenne d’Ophtalmologie Traditionnelle, CHIC Tarbes, BP 1330, 65013 Tarbes Cedex, France. (Tel: 62 51 54 52; Fax: 62 51 51 62.)

American Academy of Optometry
A meeting of the American Academy of Optometry will be held on 28–30 May 1994, at the Amsterdam Marriott Hotel, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Further details: Academy Office, 4330 East-West Highway, Suite 1117, Bethesda, MD 20814, USA. (Tel: 301 718-6500; Fax: 301 656-0992.)

Outcomes into Clinical Practice
A conference organised by the BMA, BMJ, and UK Clearing House on Health Economics will be held on 7 June 1994, at the International Hotel, Marsh Hall, Docklands, London. The meeting is particularly geared to clinical teams in both hospital and general practice. For further details: Pru Walters, BMJ House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP. (Tel: 071–383 6518.)

Office of Continuing Education
The Office of Continuing Education is holding a conference entitled ‘Principles and Practices of Data Management for Clinical Trials’ on 16–17 June 1994 at the Thomas B Turner Building, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Baltimore, Maryland, USA. Further details: Conference Coordinator, Johns Hopkins Medical Institutions, Office of Continuing Education, Turner Building, 720 Rutland Avenue, Baltimore, MD 21205, USA. (Tel: (410) 955–2959.)

International Conference on Biomedical Periodicals
The International Conference on Biomedical Periodicals will be held on 16–18 June 1994 in Beijing, China. Further details: Dr Yongmao Jiang, International Conference on Biomedical Periodicals, c/o Publishing House of Medical Journals, Chinese Medical Association, 42 Dongxi Xidajie, Beijing 100710, China. (Tel: 86–1–5133311 ext 362; Fax: 86–1–5123754.)

Xth Congress of the European Society of Ophthalmology

XXVIIth International Congress of Ophthalmology
The International Council of Ophthalmology will hold its XXVIIth Congress in Toronto, Canada on 26–30 June 1994. Further details: Secretariat, 275 Bay Street, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1R 5Z5. (Tel: (613) 563–1994; Fax: (613) 236–2727.)