Book reviews

Disorders of the Peripheral Fundus. By WILLIAM TASMAN and JERRY A. SHIELDS. Pp. 227. £19.50. Harper and Row: London. 1980.

Much more information than is apparent from reading the title appears in this book, because many diseases of the fundus do not respect anatomical boundaries, and many conditions discussed here involve the posterior pole as well as the periphery. Disorders that affect the posterior pole exclusively such as the maculopathies are not discussed.

The first 2 chapters describe the anatomy of the peripheral fundus and methods of examination. The subsequent chapters deal with the clinical and pathological features of hereditary, developmental, inflammatory, vascular, neoplastic, degenerative, and traumatic disorders. As can be expected from a knowledge of the 2 authors' main interests, the sections on tumours and paediatric aspects of fundus disease, such as retrolental fibroplasia and persistent hyperplastic primary vitreous, are particularly well discussed.

The book is profusely illustrated with fundus photographs, some taken with a wide-angle lens, as well as with many illustrations of pathological specimens and histological preparations. It provides an excellent and up-to-date review of peripheral fundus disease and can be strongly recommended to the resident in training as well as to a busy general ophthalmologist. J. J. KANSKI

The Blood-Retinal Barriers. Ed. JOSE G. CUNHA-VAZ. Pp. 391. £39.50. Plenum Publishing: New York. 1980.

This book is a collection of papers given at the NATO Advanced Study Institute Espinho, Portugal, in 1979. It represents much of the current knowledge in this most exciting 'new' field in retinal research, and it attempts to bring together widely differing disciplines from basic molecular concepts of barrier function to the very clinical aspects of fluorescein angiography.

It only partly succeeds in this. As a clinician I found the initial sections dealing with the basic aspects most interesting but some of the calculations and physico-chemical concepts almost impossible to understand. At the same time the clinical sections were, as usual, an enumeration of conditions associated with fluorescein leakage, often without trying to evaluate *why* the barrier breaks down in the individual conditions. The NATO conferences are aimed at education, but the feeling I had on reading this book was that experts were talking at each other rather than with each other. Had the discussions been published as well, this feeling might have been dispelled. It is the discussions at these meetings which are most essential.

Dr Cunha-Vaz should be congratulated on editing the book so quickly and publishing it while the data are still new and exciting. It would have benefited from avoidance of small but annoying misprints. The book emphasises the difficulties in studying ocular barriers because of their complexity and indicates the need for a much closer link between basic scientists and clinicians than exists today in many though not all institutions. This

publication is not easy bedtime reading but a small reference book which should be read by all interested in the retina. EVA M. KOHNER

World Blindness and its Prevention. Edited by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness under the direction of Sir John Wilson. Pp. 93. £7.50. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 1980.

This small volume reports a number of papers which were introduced at the First General Assembly of the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness held in Oxford on 6 to 8 July 1978. Various other documents have also been included. The statistics of blindness which are quoted have serious implications. There are 28 to 42 million *blind* people in the world. It is suggested that without decisive action this number will increase. This blindness is predominately preventable. It exists in underprivileged, underfed, undermotivated, and undervalued communities, and some of their poverty is due to blindness. Technology for the prevention of blindness exists and must be fully used.

This book lists the main causes of blindness as trachoma, xerophthalmia, onchocerciasis, cataract, glaucoma, and ocular trauma. The policies and strategies, and the action being taken in various regions, were discussed. Papers were read by some eminent ophthalmologists to emphasise the important activities which will prevent blindness and which require urgent action. The supplement provides further information on blindness, on its prevention, and on the strategic planning which is necessary to fight it. A. G. CROSS

Electrodiagnosis in Clinical Neurology. Ed. MICHAEL J. AMINOFF. Pp. 600. £24.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1980.

This book is made up of 17 chapters by various authors and for the most part is clinical in emphasis. The first chapter on the historical aspects is excellent and the book deserves at least to be borrowed for this alone.

The first group of chapters is concerned with cortical function. The impact made by the introduction of the CT scan is obvious, as there is less emphasis on the use of the techniques for localisation and identification of structural changes. Functional investigations predominate, and the application of computer analysis to the vast amount of data available is discussed. The chapter on electromyography does not mention ocular applications, but it provides a useful introduction to the terminology employed in this technique. Other related topics are nerve conduction, neuromuscular transmission, and reflex activity, including the blink reflexes.

There is a chapter on electroretinography which is basically a condensation of a recent book by the same author. Clinically it is disappointing, but this is amply compensated for by the lucid review of the physiology of the response and methodology. Included is a passing reference to electro-oculography.

The next 4 chapters are concerned with evoked responses. There is an excellent, brief, and readable account of the visually evoked response. This cuts

through the verbiage of the prolific literature of recent years and presents a most useful introduction to an important innovation. The other contributions are concerned with brain-stem potentials, somatosensory potentials, and scalp potential distribution.

The chapter on electronystagmography is otoneurological in emphasis. It is pleasing to note that, although it is nowhere explicitly stated, the editor accepts that studies based on the corneofundal potential are 2-fold. Induced changes in the potential are the basis of electro-oculography, the measurement of eye movement is electronystagmography.

The final 2 chapters are appropriately situated. The first is a review of polysomnographic evaluation of sleep disorders, the last is the electrophysiological evaluation of brain death.

It is doubtful whether the ophthalmologist will find the book, as a whole, of great use. As indicated, there are sections of interest. What is important is that the whole text is eminently readable, and the place of ophthalmic electrophysiological investigations in relation to neurological investigations is put fairly in proportion. This is a rapidly advancing field, yet references to literature as recent as 1979 are quoted. This can be recommended as an excellent introduction to further reading in this field and a reliable guide to the present clinical use.

J. H. KELSEY

Notes

International Association of Ocular Surgeons

The inaugural meeting of the International Association of Ocular Surgeons will be held in Monte Carlo on 11–17 October 1981. With Professor H. J. Merte presiding, ophthalmic surgeons will convene to examine, consider,

and discuss all aspects of ocular surgery, including, but not limited to, current practices in cataract/intraocular lens implantation, glaucoma, vitreoretinal, keratorefractive, strabismus, and oculoplastic surgery. Further details from International Association of Ocular Surgeons, 6 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60602, USA.

Indirect ophthalmoscopy

The Department of Ophthalmology and the Page and William Black Postgraduate School of Medicine of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, City University of New York, will hold a postgraduate course in indirect ophthalmoscopy and peripheral retinal disorders under the direction of Dr Keith M. Zinn on 1–2 May 1981. Details from the Director, Page and William Black Postgraduate School of Medicine, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, 1 Gustave L. Levy Place, New York, NY 10029, USA.

Ophthalmic ultrasound

A training course on ophthalmic ultrasound (eye and orbit, A-, B-, and Doppler methods) will be held at the University Eye Hospital, Würzburg, West Germany, on 5–10 October 1981. Details from Professor Dr W. Buschmann, Universitätsklinik und Poliklinik für Augenkrankheiten, Josef-Schneider Strasse 11, 8700 Würzburg, West Germany.

French Society of Ophthalmology

The next congress of the Société Française d'Ophtalmologie will be held in Paris on 10–14 May 1981. The sessions are reserved for members of the society, but enrolment forms are available for those wishing to attend the congress from the Secrétariat, Société Française d'Ophtalmologie, 9 rue Mathurin-Regnier, 75015 Paris. The annual membership fee is Fr250, which should be sent to this address.