ing of oligodendroglia and astrocytes in the retrolaminar and the intraorbital optic nerve.^{1,2} There is, however, no reference made to the optic nerve morphology within the optic canal or intracranially. Whether the changes are distributed centrally, peripherally, or evenly in the whole transverse sections is not commented on, and it is therefore difficult to compare their results with my observation.

(2) Professor Hayreh furthermore comments that I, in the discussion of my article, mention that 'The perfusion of the central parts of the nerve from a central optic nerve vessel with different extension may be of importance.' In Figs 1 and 2 in this letter, where the micrographs are taken from the left optic nerve 2 cm behind the eye (i.e., the same section as Fig. 2E in the article), such a vessel is seen. In the greater magnification the vessel can be identified as a small artery. In my case the central retinal arteries enter the optic nerve bilaterally 1 cm behind the eye, as can be seen on Fig. 2A and 2D in my article. Thus, it is shown that the central optic vessel is posterior to this in the nerve. I think that this

finding is difficult to dispute despite the statements given by Professor Hayreh.

Finally I will point out that the finding of bilateral central optic nerve necrosis in methanol poisoning is new. However, its pathogenesis is still unclear.

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References

- 1 Hayreh MS, Hayreh SS, Baumbach GL, *et al.* Methyl alcohol poisoning—III. Ocular toxicity. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1977; **95**: 1851–8.
- 4 Baumbach GL, Cancilla PA, Martin-Amat G, *et al.* Methyl alcohol poisoning—IV. Alterations of the morphological findings of the retina and optic nerve. *Arch Ophthalmol* 1977; **95**: 1859–65.

Book review

Guide Pratique des Examens de Laboratoire en Ophtalmologie. By S LIOTET AND Y MORIN. Pp. 219. 280F. Masson: Paris. 1988.

This is a useful small book designed to aid the ophthalmologist in the choice of the wide and sometimes bewildering array of available laboratory investigative techniques, to acquaint him briefly with the aims, practicalities and limitations of the techniques, and also to help him understand the result as well as prompting him towards further investigation.

The format is succinct. The first three chapters cover the range and applicability of biochemical, microbiological, and cytological techniques, with a large number of clear diagrams illustrating the principles and results of tests and types of cellular abnormality in the case of cytology. This is not a histopathologically orientated text. All chapters and sections are referenced, mostly with recent publications, many in English. The advice is knowledgeable and the book would give reassurance to a clinician lacking in confidence. There are omissions; for example, there is no discussion of techniques to investigate acanthamoebae beyond stating that identification is direct. Conversely the section on sympathetic uveitis reflects the paucity of available methods of diagnosis and recommends examination of the cerebrospinal fluid (and subsequent discovery of a lymphocytosis).

The last chapter is in many ways the most interesting: it consists of an aide-memoire and checklist of pattern of presentation and investigation of diseases listed by name, including syndromes and as such would aid the harassed or

forgetful resident (or consultant)—though one might be discreet in admitting to usage.

The book is the distillate of many years' experience, and I enjoyed it. But it cannot be said to be readable as a whole and is undoubtedly a vade-mecum. Possible purchasers should not be deterred by the fact that it is in French, for the brevity and list format make comprehension easy.

A MCCARTNEY

Notes

Panhellenic congress

The 22nd Panhellenic Ophthalmological Congress will be held in Athens on 25–28 May 1989. The congress will be at the Hotel Caravel, 2 Vas. Alexandrou Street, 116 10, Athens. Full details from the Secretariat, 10 Loukianou Street, 106 75 Athens, Greece. Registration fee after 28 February 1989 \$250.

Institute's 40th anniversary

Professor Adam Sillito delivered the Duke-Elder foundation lecture on 4 November 1988 as part of the celebrations commemorating the 40th anniversary of the Institute of Ophthalmology. Under the title 'The eye's way to the brain', he discussed retinal redundancy, synaptic gates, and attention's key to the mind – their implications for neuro-ophthalmology.