Book reviews

Making an Impact. Harvey Thomas, Liz Gill. (Pp 184; £10.95.) Newton Abbot, Devon: David and Charles Common, 1989. ISBN 0-7153-9276-X.

The man who played a large part in getting Mrs Thatcher elected three times deserves a hearing, whatever else you may wish to do to him. He combines with Liz Gill, a journalist who regularly contributes to *The Times*, to produce a most readable and informative book. Every person who has the misfortune to be given the responsibility of organising a large conference should read this volume—and those who organise smaller ones would benefit also. Harvey Thomas is an international public relations consultant and director of presentation of the Conservative party, having previously directed many of the Billy Graham international crusades. The 10 chapters are presented in three sections. The first deals with public speaking (whether to a meeting, on the radio, or before television cameras), the second with organising special events, and the third with improving grass roots support. The blurb suggests that this is a book for executives on every rung of the corporate ladder, for political campaigners of every hue, and for anyone else who wants to make an impact. It is highly recommended reading for rheumatologists as they often have at least one of these roles.

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John Charnley: The Man and the Hip. William Waugh. (Pp 238; £24.50.) London: Springer, 1990. ISBN 3-540-19587-4.

Orthopaedic surgeons would no doubt look aghast should a historian walk into the operating theatre, scalpel in hand; and rightly so. Similarly, many historians treat doctor's attempts to write their own history with some skepticism. For this historian, Charnley's biographer cannot escape some of the doubts: at times the book is repetitive, at others it takes the statements of historical actors at face value and judges past events in terms of the present. Yet it would be churlish to dwell on these points. William Waugh has produced a useful account of Charnley's personal and professional life, from his birth in Bury (1911), through his marriage to Jill Heaver (1957), to his death (1982); from his student days in Manchester and his war-time career, to the creation of the low friction arthroplasty and the clean air enclosure. Waugh has done considerable research, interviewing and corresponding with Charnley's family and numerous friends and associates. On the one hand, Charnley comes over as unable to suffer fools among his medical staff. But, on the other hand, he was willing to make amends, reputedly once chasing down the corridor to apologise to one junior doctor whom he had wrongly told off. But there are numerous other glimpses of Charnley's character and life here—of his harrowing experience of spending a night on a ledge in the Lake District with a dying climber, who had slipped while scaling the Pillar Rock at Wasdale Head; of his brave (some said foolhardy) self experimentation; of the disappointment of the failure of Teflon in low friction arthroplasty, and the triumph of the replacement of Teflon by polyethylene. Perhaps the author should not have tried so hard to show the origins of Charnley's interest in the hip—Did Charnley really only become a godfather to the daughter of a friend after examining her, 'paying particular attention to her hips'? But Waugh has provided what will almost certainly be Charnley's standard biography for some time to come.

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Immunological Diseases. 4th ed. 2 vols. Eds M Samter, D W Talmage, M M Frank, K F Austen, H N Claman. (Pp 3192; £145) Harlow, Essex: Churchill Livingstone. 1988. ISBN 0-316-76988-6, 0-316-76989-4.

This latest edition of a standard and highly respected reference work has all the hallmarks of craftsmanship and scholarship that characterised earlier editions. The contributors have immense reputations in their field of expertise and have provided solid, soberly written accounts of their subject backed by reference lists of commensurate length. The end result is a conventional reference book of the kind that resembles traditional tailoring: it is timeless in style, impeccable in appearance, thoroughly staid, but also just a little dull. The modern taste is for something a little more dashing in cut and style, although it must be said that at this modest price for such a massive work, the sartorial metaphor does rather break down.

There is currently a glut of immunological texts, and rheumatologists can readily shop around for sources of information in the two main areas likely to interest them: a description of the immunological themes that impinge on clinical rheumatology, and an account of the major rheumatic diseases with an immunological basis.

The standard immunological topics of general interest are dealt with clearly and uncontroversially, but the perennial nightmare for editors of such volumes is starkly evident. Progress in basic immunology is so rapid that its presentation in this kind of book is doomed to be anachronistic. For example, an insight into T cell physiology is indispensable for any rheumatologist who wishes to follow the current debate on the pathogenesis of rheumatoid arthritis, and it would be impossible to find more knowledgeable, lucid exponents of their craft than Philippa Marrack and John Kappler; yet any account published in 1988 with references mainly antedating 1985 is doomed to obsolescence. Much the same comments apply to its treatment of other immunological topics, such as tolerance and antibody structure, though one feels bound to add that a chapter on the HLA system devoid of a single figure adds inevitably to the sense of literary datedness. Uninitiated rheumatologists would do far better to read popular introductory texts such as Ivan Roitt's pleasantly assimilable book.¹

There are some 380 pages assigned to the principal, inflammatory rheumatic diseases, and the contributions dealing with topics such as rheumatoid arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus, and vasculitis are sound and encyclopaedic. These contributions are relatively less dated than the chapters on basic immunology partly because the references are fresher and partly because what is currently topical may reflect passing fashion rather than aetiological wisdom. Even so, one is a little put off by the often excessive reliance on figures and tables from published papers. New literary presentations for a fresh audience demand new designs, not a rummage through the wardrobe of past offerings.

Overall, it is difficult to see what rheumatologists will find in this book which is not already available in the many excellent textbooks of rheumatology on offer. The advantages of the latter as a source of information for personal acquisition are self evident. It is a literary rather than a chauvinistic judgment to conclude that as a work of reference dealing with immunological disorders in general, Lachmann and Peters cuts a more dashing figure: less wordy and better illustrated.²

Thus this is a sound volume with encyclopaedic references, modestly priced for such a tome. Nevertheless, it contains little which is not already available to rheumatologists elsewhere in a fresher, more contemporary format.

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1 Roitt I. *Essential immunology*. 6th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1988.
2 Lachmann P J, Peters D K, eds. *Clinical aspects of immunology*. 4th ed. Oxford: Blackwell Scientific, 1982.