Interphalangeal Joints. Edited by W H Bowers. Pp. 268. £50.00. Churchill Livingstone: Edinburgh. 1987.

Churchill Livingstone have just launched a new series of volumes under the general title 'The Hand and Upper Limb' and this text of the interphalangeal joints edited by William H Bowers from North Carolina is the first of the series. Subsequent titles will be of interest primarily to hand surgeons, but this volume will certainly attract the attention of rheumatologists.

The devotion of a large volume of 268 pages to the interphalangeal joints will come as no surprise to those rheumatologists who concern themselves with deformities of the hand and regularly hold joint clinics with their surgical colleagues. They will find chapters 3 and 5 of particular interest.

Chapter 3 deals with arthritis and arthrosis. There is a beautifully clear description of the causes and mechanism of the various deformities at these joints. In particular, boutonnière and swan-neck deformities are described simply and with delightful illustrations. There is an excellent description of the various ways in which these deformities can be corrected at the various stages of the disease.

The results of the various authorities are critically examined, and the reader is given clear indication of the choice of treatment and the likely results. There is a concise and most helpful section on the indications for surgery in osteoarthritis of the interphalangeal joints, and, here again, surgical enthusiasm is tempered with realism and an attention to long term effects.

Although chapter 10 on interphalangeal joint arthroplasties will have most appeal to surgeons, rheumatologists could read this with profit. It is certainly the clearest description of the various procedures available with a realistic assessment of their various merits.

Although there are excellent sections on the conservative management of stiffness with most helpful illustrations of the various types of splintage, I missed a section on the various aids and adaptations for disabled living that are such an important feature of the management of the arthritides.

There is a very clear description of the anatomy and biomechanics of the joints in the first two chapters.

This is just the book for the trainee rheumatologists to read in order to familiarise themselves with this difficult but important topic.

Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital, C B WYNN PARR
Stanmore.
Middlesex

Rheumatic Diseases: An Introduction for Medical Students. By T H J Gibson. Pp. 205. £7.95. Butterworths: Borough Green, Kent. 1986.

Within the last decade there has been an explosion of medical texts to the point that even in a specialised field such as rheumatology there is a plethora. Provided that the books achieve their stated aims there is no harm in this superfluity, but the reviewer must try to guide the potential audience. In this case the targeted audience is the medical student: when our current Firm were asked for comment there was universal approval for this paperback edition. I think the busy general practitioner would also find it useful, however, as it gives essential information on all the rheumatic syndromes.

A strong point is the use of line diagrams, drawn by the author, which bring out visual images far more effectively than would indistinct photographs.

Overall the text is simple and easy to read with succinct sentences. A useful innovation is a table at the end indicating the relative incidence of the major rheumatic diseases.

I would take issue with only one statement on page 10—just to show the reading was thorough. Visual assessment of the asymmetry of buttock height and the necessary corrective heel raise is far more accurate than attempting to measure leg length with a tape measure.

In general this book can be thoroughly recommended and is very good value for its modest price.

Physician-in-Charge,
Department of Rheumatology,
St Thomas's Hospital.

ANTHONY YATES