

In 1968, prompted by the need to settle in a climate that would be kinder to his now ailing wife, he moved to Bulawayo where he practiced very successfully until 1982. During this period his son, Greg, was killed in a motor cycle accident and Ingrid died in 1977. Now, married to Ingrid's sister, Marlene, and having reached the age of 60, he decided to return to South Africa where he hoped to enjoy the benefits of his Zimbabwean earnings.

Unfortunately his assets in that country were impounded and such funds as he was able to bring to South Africa were wholly inadequate to support him in retirement. So he joined the staff of the Provincial Hospital in Kimberley where, until shortly before his death, he virtually ran the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology. In February of 1996 Marlene died suddenly while on holiday in Sedgfield.

Few indeed are the men who have lost three wives, a son and their life's savings and who have yet pressed on. Firmly committed to sound clinical practice with never, in word or manner, the slightest request for sympathy or for special consideration. In this respect, as in others, Doss Gasson was an unforthcoming man whose pleasures were literary and private rather than material and social; and whose interests and attitudes were profound and reflective rather than trivial and spontaneous.

At the end of a life, lived with competence and strength of character as his two companions, he leaves a son, John, who is an anaesthetist in East London, a daughter-in-law, Nicky and a grandson, Simon. He leaves a brother, John, a sister, Nan du Plessis, their families and his many friends. To all of us he leaves the warm memory of how a good doctor did credit to his calling - despite misfortune and the burden of adverse circumstances.

## Erratum: J Kelman Drummond

In the September issue of the *SAMJ*, it was incorrectly stated that Dr J Kelman Drummond died in 1976. It should have read: 'Dr Drummond passed away on 9 November 1996.'

# Books

## *Themselves Writ Large\**

The British Medical Association 1832 - 1966. By Peter Bartrip. Pp xviii + 373. £32. 1996. London: BMJ. ISBN 9-780727-909985.

The British Medical Association (BMA) and its journal (*BMJ*) grew out of the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association. It became a national association and its role changed from a social and scientific group into a political organisation and trade union. The part played in the registration of doctors and the control of quacks and patent medicines is well documented. The registration of the first woman doctor, Elizabeth Blackwell, in 1859 and the first female member of the BMA, Garrett Anderson, in 1873, are reported together with the reactions of the profession. The conflicts with the government over several health schemes, especially the

National Health Services are discussed in detail. The BMA by 1971 was recognized as the sole bargaining agent with the government; its transition to a trade union was now complete. To its regret, by 1992 a quarter of the medical practitioners were still outside the Association. The decline in membership resulted from the Commonwealth countries, setting up independent associations; an increase occurred with each medicopolitical crisis. The episode of the joint meeting of the BMA and MASA scheduled for Johannesburg in 1951, which was cancelled because the SA Government refused to guarantee there would be no racial discrimination against any delegates, is a grim reminder of our past. The history ends in 1966 at the introduction of a charter for general practitioners. The outcome needs to be assessed in an updated edition.

Who should read this book? It can be profitable to anyone interested in medical history, politics and practice. Our policy makers at all levels can benefit from the experience of the past. Indeed all practitioners should be made aware of the impact that changes in society have on the practice of medicine. The author concludes, 'In common with all enduring institutions the BMA has survived and prospered by adapting to change.'

The book is hard-covered and well presented. There are no illustrations but they are available in the three previous histories of the BMA. Although commissioned by the BMA to write this history, the author is highly critical of its actions where warranted. There are a few printing errors, the most notable being the spelling of A J Orenstein as Orestein! The price is acceptable and the book is recommended.

**A Dubb**

## *Menslike Anatomie\**

J H Meiring et al. Pp. x + 772. Geillustreerd. R180. 1997. Pretoria: J L van Schaik Uitgewers. ISBN 0-627-02199-9.

I find the book well set out and incorporating all the necessary information needed by medical students. The style in which the book is written is easy to follow and is 'user friendly' as far as its students are concerned. Even though the book follows a regional approach, a lot of information is given in such a way that a systemic approach can also be accommodated. Information is often very nicely summarised, making it easier for the student to find the necessary information. The fact that the relevant embryology is included throughout the book is a very handy way of presenting the necessary facts to the students.

I did, however, miss a self-evaluation section at the end of each section (or chapter). Students need such questions to test themselves. The almost total lack of a clinical approach to the presentation of factual knowledge, is unfortunate. The days when Anatomy could be taught as a factual, completely academic subject, have long gone. Students need to see the relevance of the facts that they are

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presented with. Unfortunately this book does not allow the reader (student) such a privilege. I am of the opinion that this last fact will ensure that students will not readily recommend this book to their fellow students, and that the average student will not buy the book, unless forced to do so, even though it is not expensive.

All in all the book is another addition to the already existing large number of Anatomy textbooks available on the market. Unfortunately the market for an Afrikaans textbook is too small and I doubt if this book will become a profitable seller.

P P C Nel

### **Cancer and the Adolescent\***

Edited by Peter Selby and Clifford Bailey. Pp. xii + 298. Illustrated. £32.95. London: BMJ Publishing Group. 1996. ISBN 0-7279-0893-6.

Practitioners working with adolescent cancer will be aware that the subject often falls between paediatric and adult texts. This concise book based on the First International Conference on Cancer and the Adolescent held in Britain in 1994 gathers all the required information under one cover. The chapters are written by authorities in their field, mainly from Britain and the script is up to date, clearly presented and backed by useful current references.

The epidemiology section combines the available data relating to adolescents from established paediatric and adult cancer registries. There are excellent reviews on the current management of leukaemias, lymphomas, soft tissue sarcomas, bone tumours, germ cell tumours and testicular malignancies. The late effects of treatment include a review on cytotoxic-induced gonadal damage. The section on limb salvage surgery presents a very balanced view of the indications and the advantages and disadvantages of the procedure. It will be appreciated by physicians, orthopaedic surgeons and patients.

The psycho-social changes associated with adolescence are compounded in teenagers with cancer. Their special environmental needs are discussed. While paediatric units with educational and occupational therapy support systems meet the needs of teenagers better than most adult units, dedicated adolescent units are the ideal. Helpful advice on the advantages and pitfalls of running such a unit are provided. Teenagers with cancer need both boundaries and the independence to keep their freedom intact. Working in this framework is often difficult for the staff on the oncology unit and for the parents. The sections on working with teenagers and the adolescent's own views of handling their disease provide many helpful pointers for caregivers.

The book will find a welcome place on the bookshelves of paediatric and medical oncologists as well as any general practitioner involved in the care of an adolescent with cancer.

P Hartley



### **Imaging Drug Reactions and Toxic Hazards\***

Third Edition. Edited by George Ansell. Pp 378. Illustrated. £90. 1997. London: Chapman & Hall Medical. ISBN 0-412-55590-5.

This is the third edition of an interesting and informative book. There is a widespread recognition of the importance of adverse drug reactions and environmental hazards in causing disease.

Imaging can often be of value in confirming a suspected diagnosis and it should be kept in mind that toxic changes may cause appearances which closely mimic other common disorders.

The book is well written, thoroughly investigated and easy to read. Due to a complete index and multiple references for further reading, this can easily be used as a reference book to all clinicians and radiologists concerned with the effects of drugs and poisons, or with industrial and environmental hazards.

The chest section, as an example, contains interesting information, supported by clear radiographs of such diverse entities as inhalation of gases, drowning, barotrauma, kerosene inhalations and various combinations of drugs as seen with immunological reactions to drugs, anti-inflammatory drugs, vaccines etc.

The authors give basic explanations to the pathogenesis of X-ray signs and how different exposures cause different appearances.

This is a reference book which should be valuable to all clinicians and radiologists working in centres where potential toxic and poisonous substances are used.

The text is easy to read, informative and based on experience. I thoroughly enjoyed reading it and can recommend it.

S F Prinsloo

### **Books received**

The receipt of these books is acknowledged, and this listing must be regarded as sufficient return for the courtesy of the sender. Books that appear to be of particular interest will be reviewed as space permits. The Journal does not publish unsolicited reviews.

**Handbook of Dermatology for Primary Care.** By Norma Saxe, Susan Jessop and Gail Todd. Pp. xv + 215. Illustrated. R130. Cape Town: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-571129-7.

**Guanidino Compounds in Biology & Medicine II.** Edited by P P De Deyn, B Marescau, I A Qureshi and A Mori. Pp. 420. Illustrated. £60/US\$105. London: John Libbey & Company Limited. 1997. ISBN 0-86196-543-4.

**Advances in Magnesium Research: I. Magnesium in Cardiology.** Edited by Ronald Smetana. Pp. 632. Illustrated. £75/US\$131. London: John Libbey & Company Limited. 1997. ISBN 0-86196-555-8.

**Neuromuscular Diseases During Development.** Edited by F Cornelio, G Lanzi and E Fedrizzi. Pp. 164. Illustrated. £36/US\$131. London: John Libbey & Company Limited. 1997. ISBN 0-86196-5418.

**Essential Surgical Technique.** Edited by Colin D Johnson and John Cumming. Pp. vii + 314. Illustrated. £24.99. London: Chapman & Hall Medical. 1997. ISBN 0-412-55470-4.