followed by an analysis of structure and then of function. Some of this material has been published previously in the *Annals* and formed the substance of the author's MD thesis.

Part 4 is on applied instrumentation and, for example, deals with haemorrhage, wound closure, extraction of foreign materials and amputation. This section contains much of general surgical interest and for the occasional reader may be of greater interest than some of the more specialised earlier chapters.

The book is lavishly illustrated throughout with more than 500 black-and-white line drawings and photographs. There is also a central section of 30 colour plates showing boxed collections of 19th-century instruments and plates from illustrated surgical manuscripts and books of the past. Each chapter is extensively referenced. To conclude, there is a comprehensive bibliography and a useful appendix detailing museums and collections throughout the world that exhibit surgical instruments.

Are there any criticisms? I could find only one error during a detailed reading and that relates to an illustration rather than the text! Plate III is incorrectly labelled. Beyond this I found some of the illustrations disappointingly small given the detail they contain and a few have reproduced poorly.

Overall, however, I believe this to be a unique reference volume that will be consulted for many years to come by those who wish to understand how the developing craft of surgery necessitated developments in instrument design and, conversely, how serial advances in materials technology allowed developments to take place in the craft of surgery. It will also be of special interest to instrument collectors and medical historians.

Recent Advances in Surgery 29

COLIN JOHNSON, IRVING TAYLOR

EXTENT P/H	240 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£35.00, 1853156922
PUBLISHER	RSM (London), 2006
REVIEWER	Dominic Slade
STAR RATING	****

Recent Advances in Surgery is a well-established series from the Royal Society of Medicine Press, masterfully edited by Colin Johnson and Irving Taylor. It is updated annually and attempts to review trends in current practice and advances within the surgical specialties. In recent years, it has adopted a standard format with sections of one to five chapters devoted to the generality of surgery. In this edition, there are sections for surgery in general, liver and pancreatic surgery, vascular surgery, breast disease and a final chapter that summarises the leading randomised clinical trials from the preceding year. Every chapter contains boxes highlighting key points for clinical practice, which are summarised neatly before the reference section.

This year's offering has an especially diverse range of topics drawn from 34 separate authors comprising renowned experts in their field, practising consultant surgeons, registrars and SHOs. The book contains largely black-and-white illustrations although the chapter on gynaecomastia has a number of colour plates within it. There are a considerable number of pertinent radiographic images as well as a few line drawings.

Within the section on general surgery there is a review of paediatric surgery in the district general hospital. This serves as both a concise summary of the commonly encountered conditions as well as a guide to the management of children outside a specialist centre. There follows an excellent update on pre-operative cardiac assessment and optimisation, an in-depth review of angiogenesis and its relevance to neoplasia and a concise summary of sickle cell disease as it relates to surgical practice. Superb updates are provided in the chapters on fast-track surgery, radiofrequency and thermal ablation of tumours and live-donor liver transplantation. I particularly enjoyed the sections on pancreatic, liver and splenic trauma clearly written by surgeons with a life-time's experience in the field. I also found the review of severe acute pancreatitis superbly structured, reasoned and crisply written.

New technologies in vascular surgery are explored including the minimally invasive management of pseudo-aneurysms and endovenous laser therapy. As always, the randomised clinical trials section brings one up to date with studies that may influence general surgical practice and makes an excellent starting point for further reading.

The *Recent Advances* series has always been championed as excellent revision material for surgical examinations and this particular volume covers a very diverse field indeed within which every potential candidate should find sections of relevance. For those wishing to broaden their understanding and to be brought up to date with key advances in surgery in general, this book is for them.

Churchill's Pocketbook of Surgery (3rd edn)

ANDREW RAFTERY, MICHAEL DELBRIDGE

EXTENT P/H	632 pages, Paperback
PRICE/ISBN	£19.99, 0443102740
PUBLISHER	Churchill Livingstone (London), 2006
REVIEWER	John Winstanley
STAR RATING	****

This is the third edition of what has in the past proved a popular book as evidenced by the publisher's commercial confidence in going to a further edition. The authors' aim as stated in the preface is to produce a concise, didactic account of the common surgical disorders that is both affordable and fits in the pocket, although not many

trainees wear white coats these days! They have achieved this objective admirably and they make no claims that it is intended as a detailed text with discussions of opposing views on management.

The book covers all the major spheres of surgery likely to be encountered by an SHO or SpR. As well as covering topics within general surgery, it also includes sections on neurosurgery, orthopaedics, urology and plastic surgery, so that somebody reading this book from cover-to-cover should end up with a broad knowledge, certainly from the point of view of final MB and MRCS. In addition, there are more general chapters on investigations, shock and trauma, pre- and postoperative care and malignant disease. There is also useful information on communication skills and breaking bad news. The layout is good, with boxes in the text to highlight important points and useful, simple diagrams. There is also a quick reference index for finding the sections dealing with common surgical emergencies. The text gives pointers on how to reach a differential diagnosis, which is very useful in today's era of specialisation.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever had as a trainee was that it was better to know a little book well than a big book badly: this is a little book that is worth knowing well. The authors apologise in the preface for not including much that is in line with modern medical educational theory. I think the apology is unnecessary as, ultimately (despite the current enthusiasm for problem-based learning), like most practical, down-to-earth subjects, surgery is best taught in the first instance didactically rather than theoretically.

Body Contouring After Massive Weight Loss

AL ALY

EXTENT P/H	400 pages, Hardback
PRICE/ISBN	US\$450.00, 1576262111
PUBLISHER	Quality Medical Publishing (Missouri), 2005
REVIEWER	Dai Davies
STAR RATING	*****

We are all aware that there is a global epidemic of obesity in adults and children. According to current estimates, more than 1 billion adults are overweight. The UK Department of Health

predicts that one in three adults and a fifth of all children, a total of 13 million people, will be clinically obese in the UK by 2010 and will present a crippling burden to the NHS. There has been a huge increase in surgical procedures to facilitate weight loss in the US. Figures from the American Society of Plastic Surgeons show that the biggest increase in demand for cosmetic surgery in the last 2 years has been to remove skin excess in massive weight-loss patients. This book with two CD-ROMs edited by an experienced surgeon, Dr Aly, is therefore timely.

The book opens with a very good review of the surgical treatment of morbid obesity of which the laparoscopic adjustable gastric band procedure is just one of five surgical possibilities. The authors emphasise the importance of a team approach to such patients, including a psychiatrist, dietician, exercise physiologist, bariatric surgeon and a plastic surgeon.

The main part of the book describes surgical techniques to excise redundant skin divided into anatomical regions. Procedures such as belt lipectomy, lower body lift with medial thigh lift, and buttock lift are all well presented with the appropriate anatomy and very good illustrations. This is reinforced by the two CD-ROMs – one clearly demonstrates the operation of belt lipectomy and the second, upper-body lift.

Dr Aly rightly emphasises the high complication rate associated with operating on this group of patients. In a consecutive series of 70 patients having belt lipectomy, 56 had at least one major complication, for example, seroma, wound dehiscence, psychiatric difficulty, infection, tissue necrosis as well as pulmonary embolus and deep vein thrombosis. At the end of each chapter, Dr Aly's experience is highlighted in a 'Summary of Pearls'. Surgical operations of the upper half of the body are equally well covered.

The presentation of this text is extremely high as one would expect from Quality Medical Publishing. The list of contributors to the book is both impressive and comprehensive and each chapter is well annotated with the appropriate references to the scientific literature.

Overall, this book is a must for the presumably small group of surgeons who will become involved with this group of patients. It is not for the faint-hearted: the possibility of major complications is real but this is a good start for surgeons developing an interest in this area. My only criticism is that the CD-ROM on upper body lifting could have been better edited but otherwise I strongly recommend this book and give it five stars.