symposia was held in October 1974 in New Delhi and considered growth and development of the brain, and the proceedings are now presented under the editorship of Dr. Mary Brazier. Contributions include a number from well-known research workers from Europe and North America, as well as less well-known, including some from India and Iran.

Topics include very full and helpful reviews of morphological, biochemical and neurophysiological aspects of brain maturation, as well as a detailed account of the effects of human malnutrition. It is these reviews rather than the accounts of contributors' original work which are most valuable to those seeking a recent perspective of this very important field.

Rajalakshuni is rather cautious in his paper on 'Factors affecting psychological development in man' in extrapolating from the intellectual deficits seen as a result of extreme malnutrition (for example, kwashiorkor) to populations where nutritional intake is thought to be sufficiently inadequate to influence birth weight. He concludes that, in India, the evidence studied so far does not suggest that the mental development of well children differs significantly according to their nutritional status. In a final provocative paper with a title more like a banner headline from a daily tabloid 'U.S. poverty impact on brain development' a group from the Universities of California (San Diego and Berkeley) conclude that as many as 10% of the population of San Diego County 'are seriously undernourished according to our criteria relating to brain jeopardy'. (Symbionese Liberation Army, please note.)

JOHN WILSON

Aids to the Examination of the Peripheral Nervous System Medical Research Council Memorandum No. 45. (Pp. 62; illustrated; 80p.) Her Majesty's Stationery Office: London, 1976.

For 35 years *Aids to the Investigation of Peripheral Nerve Injuries* has been the most useful guide available for the examination of patients with neuromuscular disease. Prepared by the Medical Research Council in wartime, it was primarily intended for use in connection

with nerve injuries. The new title reflects its wider use, and opportunity has been taken to revise the text and captions, to introduce new illustrations, and to replace photographs. Provided that the user is aware of the more common anatomical variables—so called anomalous innervation—and meticulously follows the methods illustrated, this guide will remain essential for every neurologist. The nomenclature has been updated.

J. A. SIMPSON

EEG Instrumentation and Technology By E. T. Richey and Richard Namon. (Pp. 206; illustrated; \$22.50.) Charles C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois, 1976.

This book cannot be compared with standard works such as *EEG Technology* (2nd Edition) by Cooper, Osselson, and Shaw (Butterworths). The instrumentation described is of 1950 vintage, and the style in the tradition of Baedeker: 'Do not attempt to operate or troubleshoot a piece of smelling or smoking equipment', with the fatherly advice 'The manufacturer will be willing to help since the equipment will not have been paid'.

Elementary EEG technology is carefully explained but frequently oversimplified to the point of imbecility, and there is a quite unwarranted emphasis on localising tumours—a job much better left to the EMI scanner—whereas the proper domain of electroencephalography is the study of cerebral function.

H. R. A. TOWNSEND

The Responsive Brain By W. C. McCallum and J. R. Knott. (Pp. 272; illustrated; £10.00.) John Wright & Sons Ltd.: Bristol, 1976.

The unresponsive brain is surely no brain at all! The reader might therefore expect from the title a wide-ranging review of all the ways in which the brain can transmute stimuli into action or stored information. The editors can hardly be blamed for preferring their eye-catching title to the true one: 'The Proceedings of the Third International Congress on Event-related Slow Potentials of the Brain', but they conceal that the responsiveness refers to a very limited aspect of the electrical activity of the brain, made dimly visible by very special techniques.

In the main this congress was about the slow potential changes which can be

detected on the scalp between two stimuli, the first a warning, and the second requiring a response; in other words, the Contingent Negative Variation, discovered by Grey Walter and his colleagues a dozen years ago. The properties of other slow potentials related to movement and to sensory stimuli are described, in particular those of the so-called P-300, which is a positive deflection occurring around that number of milliseconds after a sensory stimulus; the interrelationship of these components is involved and was then unresolved.

As with all congress reports, the basic material of this book is the presentation, of varied weight and length, by the individual speakers. However, the organisers and editors have done a first class job in welding them into something like a logical exposition of the subject. The references have been amalgamated into a single extensive bibliography. In short, an invaluable book to those working in this field.

W. A. COBB

GABA in Nervous System Function Edited by E. Roberts, T. N. Chase, and D. B. Tower. (Pp. 554; illustrated; £10.00.) Raven Press: New York, 1976.

The volume records the proceedings of a workshop held in February 1975. The contributors circulated their manuscripts before the meeting and subsequently revised them for publication in this volume. The result is a comprehensive and authoritative review of the 'state of the art'. The material includes the synthesis, synaptic inactivation, and degradation of GABA in the nervous system; immunohistochemical visualisation, subcellular localisation, and regional distribution in the CNS; electrophysiological actions of GABA in invertebrate and vertebrate neurons; the characterisation of GABA receptors; clinically orientated chapters on the role of GABA in epilepsy and extrapyramidal disease; and a discussion of possible means of manipulating brain GABA in man. The problem is that few tools are available for safe use in patients, and there is none which selectively affects GABA in one part of the brain but not another. However, when such drugs are synthesised their use will be based on the basic information on GABA in the CNS represented