Book reviews

There is an initial good historical review and a further very useful chapter of 16 short sections summarising individual views and theories of famous figures in aphasiology from Baillarger (1865) to Goodglass (designated 1972). So much history may seem unnecessary but it does help understanding of a subject still in some turmoil and one in which views do tend to run in cycles; no aphasiologist needs reminding that once half-forgotten views of 19th Century neurologists have again come to dominate localisationist theory.

There is a 65 page section entitled "The Biology of Speech and Language" which provides a useful summary of connections of the language areas, maturation and myelination of the brain, and the learning of language as well as some pathology. Then there are the expected chapters on individual aphasic syndromes, dominance, language and psychiatric disease, aphasia in polyglots and so on, and a long section reviewing and explaining aphasia therapy. In these the presentation is advanced but unusual. To start with most neurologists will be unaccustomed to some of the neurological terminology (for example Wernicke's aphasia types I, II and III being respectively Wernicke's aphasia of traditional type, transcortical sensory aphasia and a form of aphasia with features of the angular gyrus syndrome). The procedure described in the chapter on "Assessment of the Aphasic Patient" again will be unfamiliar to the increasing number of neurologists using a contracted version of the popular Boston scheme. There is strong linguistic bias and an unusual feature throughout is the insertion of long transcripts of aphasic speech of different types.

The book is not for the beginner. It is generally successful and interesting, a little out of the ordinary and at £21.50 for nearly 500 pages is not so expensive for a specialist book. Certainly a good library buy and useful to the specialist collector.

JOHN C MEADOWS

Neuropeptides. Handbook of Psychopharmacology Volume 16. Edited by Leslie L Iversen, Susan D Iversen and Solomon H Snyder. (Pp 577; \$65.00.) New York: Plenum Publishing Corporation, 1983.

The volumes comprising the *Handbook of Psychopharmacology* form one of the most successful series in the neurosciences. The present one on neuropeptides forms part of Section IV which deals with updating basic

neuropharmacology and which was initially covered by the first six volumes. Indeed none of the neuropeptides dealt with in volume 16 had been identified in brain when this series started: such is the revolution that has occurred in this area of research. With the detection of some 40 peptide substances in brain such a volume is very timely. The chapters review research aspects of substance P, enkephalins, endorphins, cholecystokinin, VIP, antidiuretic, neurotensin, and bombesin, so providing a wide coverage of the most topical of these substances. Many of the chapters are by authors working at or originating from the MRC Neurochemical Pharmacology Unit at Cambridge so emphasising their major contribution to this field. Most contributions are highly specific to the author's field of research but attempts have been made to broaden the subject matter to interest the less knowledgeable. Overall, not a volume for the casual reader but a must for those with a broad interest in neuropeptides in brain. As part of the series of the *Handbook in Pharmacology*, the volume forms another useful contribution which keeps it at the top of its league.

P JENNER

Extrapyramidal Disorders. Journal of Neural Transmission Supplementum 19. Edited by Prof Walther Birkmayer and Prof RC Duvoisin. (Pp 324; DM148.00.) Vienna: Springer-Verlag, 1983.

The knowledge of an impending *festschrift* in honour of Professor Melvin Yahr's 65th birthday was met with pleasure by all those of us who have been so stimulated by his work in the field of Parkinson's disease over the years. The book however published as a supplement by the Journal of Neural Transmission is a disappointment. It is a curious mixture of review articles, esoteric research papers and a few hurried clinical offerings which I suspect have been submitted here to escape the censure of referees. About a third of the contributors are contemporary colleagues of Professor Yahr while the remainder are international authorities on basal ganglia disease. To my mind the review papers are the most successful, and I would single out those by Elizan (Virology), Marsden (Neuromelanin), the Pasik's (Anatomy of the Pallidum) and Hoehn (long term levodopa) for particular praise. The chapter by the Innsbruck group on premorbid personality of parkinsonians

is also stimulating and is new unpublished data. For the cognoscenti there are interesting crumbs here but it is to be hoped that for Professor Yahr's next *festschrift*, a more loving and balanced book will appear along the lines of the one he himself has just edited on the late Houston Merritt.

AJ LEES

First International Congress of the Skull Base Study Group. Traumatology of the Skull Base Anatomy Clinical and Radiological Diagnosis Operative Treatment. Edited by M Samii and J Brihaye. (Pp 240; \$30.90.) Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1983.

This volume is a multi-author work consisting of a collection of papers presented at the 1st International Meeting of the Skull Base Study Group held in Brussels 1982. The papers are presented under eight main headings as follows: Pathophysiology of Skull Base Injuries, Olfactory Nerve Tract, Optic Nerve and Orbit, Facial Nerve, Vestibulocochlear and Hearing Mechanisms, Vascular Injuries and Craniocervical Junction.

Multi-author books inevitably suffer from in-built disadvantages including wide variation in the quality of individual presentations, overlap of subject matter and difficulties in achieving a balance between the various topics covered. This volume is no exception.

I found the first section disappointing in its quality and in places the relevance of the subject matter to skull base trauma was difficult to see. For example, the four line paragraph on page 28 under the heading on "Cortex of the Brain and Traumatic Epilepsy". Other contributions are excellent. The paper on radiological evaluation of skull base trauma is concise, well laid out and extremely helpful, although it is a pity that it contains no illustrations. All the chapters in the second section are of high quality, the contribution by McDowell on general anaesthesia in severe head injury should be compulsive reading for any anaesthetist required to anaesthetise head injured patients in the acute phase. Examples of overlap of information are particularly noticeable in the section on Optic Nerve and Orbit, in which blow-out fractures are considered in varying degrees of detail in three separate papers. The book ends on a high note with the section on Craniocervical Junction Trauma which is both well written and balanced and extremely useful.