Functions of the Basal Ganglia CIBA Foundation Symposium 107. (Pp 279; £26.50.) London: Pitman Books, 1984.

All the frequently expressed reservations concerning the publication of symposia proceedings are invariably overcome by the Ciba Foundation. Contributors are truly international and multi-disciplinary; topics are carefully selected and ripe for such discussion; papers are mercifully few in number, but characteristically scholarly and authoritative, supplemented by full and wide-ranging discussion which is often exciting and stimulating by its spontaneity as well as its content; publications are comprehensively referenced and attractively presented and—certainly not least in importance—are carefully and promptly edited. Such features effectively silence the most tetchy of reviewers. The present volume is no exception.

The twelve selected topics cover a wide range of rapidly evolving areas in neurobiology. These include dynamic and functional discoveries in neuro-anatomy, the subtleties of synaptic organisation, neurochemically specific sub-systems, behavioural effects of neuro-transmitters, models of basal ganglia disease and whenever possible appropriate clinical correlations. The formal presentations and the discussions are of such high quality that it would be unfair to the remainder if one or two were selected for comment. This is a most valuable book, not only for neuroscientists, but also for clinicians attempting to keep abreast of developments in a fascinating field of neurology, and it is enthusiastically recommended for all—including organisers and editors of future symposia.

GERALD STERN

Diagnosis and Management of Hearing Loss. Editors: William L Meyerhoff, Stephen Liston and Robert G Anderson. (Pp 182; £37.00.) London: WB Saunders Co, 1984.

"Hearing loss may be the most common physical disability suffered by people living in the United States"—an observation, which may be applied to most western societies. It is this realisation that has prompted the recent plethora of monographs, reference books and textbooks on the subject of hearing impairment. This new textbook aims "to provide a logical and comprehensive approach to the under-

standing of hearing loss and related conditions". It is disappointing to find that these aims have not been achieved. The text comprises nine chapters, which have been produced under strict editorial control (the chief editor is a co-author in six of the nine chapters) but, nonetheless, the information is not presented in a logical manner, and is by no means comprehensive.

The first chapter comprises an introduction to the whole subject. There is a good overview of the magnitude of the problem in the United States, and a brief but clear-and-well-illustrated section on the anatomy of the ear. There is relatively little information on the physiology of hearing and no discussion whatsoever of central auditory function, despite the statement that "central auditory function and dysfunction are currently subjects of intense and exciting research". Although the first chapter mentions the need for audiometric assessment and outlines in some detail a classification of hearing loss, these two essential aspects of the subjects are not fully discussed until the last two chapters of the book.

The central core of chapters on conductive hearing impairment, sensori-neural hearing loss, sudden hearing loss and tinnitus are didactic, but well-illustrated and reasonably comprehensive in terms of covering the main aetiologies. There is some imbalance in the subject matter as a whole chapter is devoted to otitis media, while one column of print is devoted to each of acoustic neurinoma, Meniere's disease and presbycusis. Furthermore, "although there are about fifteen million people in the United States who probably could benefit from an appropriate amplification device", this subject is also briefly dealt with in a mere two pages of text.

The chapter on vertigo cannot be recommended. Some statements are decidedly misleading, for example, "the nystagmus associated with multiple sclerosis is of a characteristic pattern. . . and is often diagnostic on electronystagmography", while other statements are incorrect, for example, "temporal lobe epilepsy presents with episodic vertigo. . . and it has a characteristic electronystagmographic pattern". In addition the proposed medical management of acute vertigo with narcotic analgesics and tranquilisers is not the commonly accepted mode of treatment in the United Kingdom.

The second from last chapter in the book lumps together basic audiological investigations and rehabilitation. These are both subjects which in a textbook entitled *Diag-*

nosis and Management of Hearing Loss deserve considerably more weight than they are given. Nonetheless the techniques of audiological investigation which are outlined (electrophysiological testing is completely omitted) are clearly and simply explained with valuable examples of test results in various otological conditions. These would be particularly valuable to the novice in the field.

A final chapter on screening and referral would be of value to North American readers but is not applicable to the reader in the United Kingdom as the system of audiological and otolaryngological services is quite different. Rather unexpectedly in a chapter on screening, there is an excellent classification of hearing disorders.

Overall, this textbook has little to add to the numerous other books available on this subject. The text is didactic and oversimplified. There is inadequate explanation of important principles of diagnosis and management of the hearing impaired for medical students and insufficient depth for the post-graduate who may turn to this book. Importantly for the neurologist or neurosurgeon there is little discussion of the medical and central auditory aspects of hearing loss and throughout, there are limited reference lists, from which further information could be obtained.

LINDA M LUXON

Dandy of Johns Hopkins. By William Lloyd Fox. (Pp 293; £19.00.) London: Williams & Wilkins, 1984.

If asked to name the most famous of all neurosurgeons, the majority would probably choose Harvey Cushing. The second best-known might well be Walter Dandy, yet until now no major biography has been written about him. Unfortunately nearly forty years have elapsed since his death and there are few alive today who knew him in his prime.

Walter Dandy was born in 1886, the son of a railway employee who had emigrated to America from Lancashire, and a lass from Northern Ireland. This background makes his later ambition, and his desire for achievement, as understandable as are several other characteristics that emerge from this account of his life, such as his concern about money and a conviction of the rightness of his views. It is not generally realised that Dandy received his basic training in neurosurgery from Cushing over a period of about three years before Cushing moved