

tributors from Japan describe the effects of TRH and TRH analogues, administered parenterally and orally, on patients with a variety of degenerative ataxic disorders. There is an extensive introductory section describing the distribution, metabolism, and function of TRH in the nervous system and elsewhere, two chapters on the pharmacokinetics of TRH, and further chapters on the effects of TRH on various mouse models of ataxia. A useful summary of what is known about neurotransmitters and cerebellar function is provided by Kanazawa. Yoshida and Nakanishi review various clinical and other methods of evaluating disability in ataxic patients. Overall the Japanese experience, based on either open or controlled trials, suggests that administration of TRH or its analogue DN-1417 increases stability of stance and gait and improves dysarthria in patients with degenerative ataxias. This book provides a useful starting point for anyone hoping to confirm these results in further trials.

ANITA HARDING

Biology of Brain Tumour. Edited by MD Walker and DGT Thomas. (Pp 515; £125.25.) Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1986.

Just over 100 years ago on the 25 November 1884 at The Hospital for Epilepsy and Paralysis, Rickman Godlee performed the first reported operation on a patient with a glioma. The hospital, which was initially in a house off Marylebone High Street, moved in 1872 to a building in Regents Park, the site of which today is part of the London Zoological Gardens. In 1903 the hospital moved to its present site in Maida Vale, and there is irony and sadness in the prospect of that hospital's closure within a century of its foundation.

To mark this surgical centenary, the Second International Symposium on Biology of Brain Tumour was held at the Zoological Society in October 1984; hence the publication of the Proceedings in late 1986 under the title *Biology of Brain Tumour*. The seven sections in the book are: Molecular Neuro-oncology, Modern Neuropathology, Correlates of Brain Tumour Imaging, Surgical Neuro-oncology, The Biology of Radiotherapy, Drug Therapy, and Immunoneurobiology. The first contribution in most of the sections is something of a "key-note address", the other papers being more or less related to that subject. A few of the contributions were invited, but the majority were papers submitted.

The objective of the Symposium was to

bring together a group of research workers, oncologists and clinicians whose major interest was brain tumours, and to record the current "state of the Art". The first was undoubtedly achieved, and as with all such gatherings, those who attended gained much from personal meetings, and private or open discussion with colleagues.

It is the second objective which is more difficult to assess, as is the rightful place of the publication of conference proceedings in general in the form of a relatively expensive (£125.25) book. For workers in the neurological sciences who are not involved in the subject, either clinically or in the laboratory, the book would have very limited appeal. Had the historical aspects been given greater weight—and it is surprising that the tantalisingly short piece on the surgical history of Maida Vale Hospital was not expanded and given first place—the book would have had a much wider appeal. Similarly the "key-note" communications which should have set the scene for each section, vary greatly in achieving that goal. With the exception of Molecular Biology of Cancer, and Current Approaches to Chemotherapy, the keynote topics are generally disappointing. Some are an unhappy amalgam of the author's own current research interests and an over-view of the subject, and with the limitation of space, neither aspect is developed satisfactorily. Finally for the "general" reader, the value of the book would have been very greatly enhanced if a chapter had been written after the Symposium by the two editors, in which the threads of the Symposium had been drawn together with some indications of the way forward. Michael Walker and David Thomas, with their own very important and extensive contributions to the subject were in a unique position to do this.

For workers in the field of malignant brain tumour, individual contributions will be of value in their content and bibliography. A few contain new ideas, some controversial and even within this one volume there are conflicting results on the same subject, as with the laser. Inevitably there are criticisms of the book as a collection of papers on original work. Some contributors have published their work more fully elsewhere and interested readers will turn to those other sources. It is doubtful whether some of the contributions would have been accepted by journals which referee critically. Lastly, contributions had to be submitted some months before the Symposium, and therefore it is likely that work in some fields was completed 3 years or more prior to publication. Unfortunately such delays seem inevitable when publication takes this form.

The book is well produced in text and illustrations but with some errors in page numbering in the table of contents. It marks an important occasion, and its value will depend upon the needs of the individual reader.

JOHN GARFIELD

Notices

Society of British Neurological Surgeons.

The next meeting will be held at the Institute of Psychiatry, London, 17–18 September 1987. Particulars can be obtained from The Secretary, Neuroscience Unit, Walsgrave Hospital, Clifford Bridge Road, Walsgrave, Coventry.

European Neurological Society

The European Neurological Society (ENS) has been founded to foster cooperation between neurologists and those working in related disciplines within Europe. Meetings will be held biennially. The participation of individuals from other areas of the world is welcomed. The biennial meetings will provide instructional courses for neurologists in training, up-date symposia, and sessions on the presentation of original work, either as platform or poster presentations. The first meeting will be held in Nice from June 19–22, 1988, when the teaching programme will include courses on peripheral neuropathy, neuroimaging, dementia, and neurovirology/neuroimmunology. There will be symposia on physiological and pathological aspects of cerebral blood flow, neuromediators, and neurogenetics.

Further information about the ENS may be obtained from the Secretary, Professor Said, Service de Neurologie, Hôpital de Bicêtre, 94275 Le Kremlin Bicêtre Cédex, France.

The XXXI International Congress on the History of Medicine

This Congress will be held in Bologna August—4 September 1988. Information may be obtained from Secretariat, Cattedra di Storia della Medicina, Via Massarenti, 40138 Bologna, Italy.