of the barber-surgeons. There are some extraordinary records of survival from brain injury, such as those of Hildanus (1560–1634) who urged both sexual abstinence and the avoidance of laughter on those who had suffered severe head injury. There is a whole chapter devoted to our royalist Surgeon-Surgeon Wiseman, whose timeless advice on trepanation is quoted: that it should be done carefully and “not listening to the prattling of the Standersby”.

These and other familiar characters are here, but Dr Bakay draws attention to others less well known, and he gives particular and deserving notice to the French school of surgery. The chapter on François Quesnay (1694–1784) recounts the remarkable career of a man who became a distinguished early economist after being chirurgien Royal and Premier médecin ordinaire to Louis XV, the duties including that of adviser on sexual matters between the king and the apparently frigid Madame de Pompadour—who left him an annuity of 4,000 livres. Tempora mutantur!

There is a valuable review of the importance of the work of Ernst von Bergmann, on the mechanisms of increased intracranial pressure, which antedated the more refined experiments of Cushing, and Dr Bakay compares their respective findings. The last chapter, on the discovery of the ventricular passages, is particularly well done, apart from the two brief paragraphs on those fascinating structures, the arachnoid granulations, which are a bit of a disappointment as an end to such an enjoyable book.

JOHN POTTER


It is extremely rare in this age of multi-authored texts to come across a book that is written by one person alone. The lack of need to coordinate the contributions from multiple sources ensures that it is up to date and minimises the overlap between chapters. Ivan Moseley is an acknowledged expert in neurodiagnosis from a department of international renown and this book closely reflects his considerable personal expertise. He modestly refers to the text as an introduction to magnetic resonance imaging but this is an understatement of the quality of the content.

There are 13 chapters, of which the first is devoted to the physics of magnetic resonance. Most physicians would prefer to regard the production of images from magnetism as closely akin to magic, but the author has succeeded in making a complex subject understandable. Eight chapters deal with common presentations of neurological disorder in the brain and are dealt with in a predominantly problem orientated format. There is considerable content of clinical signs and this is most appropriate. The chapters deal with the common indications for MRI in diagnosis of neurological disorders in the brain and there is frequent reference to other diagnostic techniques. The illustrations are generally of high quality with mainly spin echo technique and inversion recovery. The latter images will no doubt prove somewhat alien to American readers where strongly T1-weighted inversion recovery images are rarely used. One chapter covers developmental disorders of the brain including a number of conditions that will be unfamiliar to the average non-specialist but for which MRI is extremely useful and will be of interest to neuroradiologists. The orbit is well covered in a separate chapter and the last two chapters deal with acute and chronic conditions of the cord and spinal canal.

Overall the book is well illustrated and referenced with very few typographical errors and at a reasonable price is highly recommended as an introduction for the individual and will serve as an extremely good reference manual for departmental purchase.

TIM COX
JOHN BINGHAM


This book represents the proceedings of the symposium which was held in 1986 and sponsored by the Mind Science Foundation.

The chairman of this meeting was Dr George Glenner who describes in the preface an exciting closed meeting with considerable cross fertilisation of ideas. It would appear that the meeting was indeed successful but whether the proceedings of such a meeting need be published is less certain. The chapters vary between genuine discussions of theoretical aspects to chapters which read as formal research reports with method and result sections. The theoretical chapters by Wurtman and Cotman are both notable and they refer to the possibility that damage to susceptible neurons may have a snowball effect. In the case of Wurtman's model there may be "auto-cannibalism" of membranes to maintain acetylcholine synthesis. In the model suggested by Cotman enhanced plasticity early in the disease following partial denervation may increase susceptibility to excitotoxin mediated cellular damage. The discussion on the relationship between Down's syndrome and Alzheimer's disease is also of particular interest, but this chapter, together with those on amyloid, now seems dated with the subsequent demonstration that a familial Alzheimer's disease gene is indeed located on chromosome 21 as is the coding gene for the amyloid precursor protein. One irritating feature which could have been easily avoided is the inclusion of all the figures and tables at the end of each chapter rather than at an appropriate point in the text. This rapidly changing field renders redundant those symposia that rely on the publication of the most recent results whereas those which genuinely attempt synthesis and discussion of the theoretical aspect survive. There are sufficient chapters of the latter type to recommend this book for neurologists to read but not to purchase.

M ROSSOR


This is a small book in the State of the Art Reviews series which well fulfills its title. The editors and a number of the contributors are from the University of Cincinnati Medical Center where laser surgery is clearly well established. The introduction is followed by a short section on laser physics which is succinct and sufficient. The account of laser safety which follows is a detailed presentation relevant to FDA regulations and the role of the nurse in the operating theatre, and happens to include among the appendices an interesting diagram of the layout for a prodecure.

The authors from Cincinnati then describe and illustrate the use of the carbon dioxide laser in the excision of 50 basal meningiomas and two chordomas for which the micro-manipulator and focused beam achieve sharp dissection and defocused higher wattage tumour vapourisation. Transphenoidal microsurgery for the removal of pituitary micro and macro adenomas by defocused laser at 5 and 10 watts is well