Shoulder arthroscopy
By G. Gartsman

This is the book which every shoulder surgeon has been eagerly awaiting. Unbelievably, ten years have passed since Drs Gartsman and Ellman wrote “Arthroscopic shoulder surgery and related procedures”, an instant classic and one of the finest books to balance the merits of arthroscopic and open shoulder surgery. During that decade arthroscopy has advanced rapidly. No serious shoulder surgeon would now undertake an open acromioplasty, and the results of arthroscopic Bankart repairs and even arthroscopic rotator cuff repairs are improving. Dr Gartsman, a past President of the American Shoulder and Elbow Society, has led these radical developments. Not only has he pioneered complex arthroscopic procedures, but he has also audited his results and published critical articles on all aspects of arthroscopic shoulder surgery. His paper in the JBJS [Am] (1998; 80-A: 832) showed that in 1994 he was performing 74 arthroscopic rotator cuff tears each year with good results and no complications. Now this evidence has been assembled in the new book “Shoulder arthroscopy” published by W. B. Saunders.

This is the book for shoulder surgeons who are comfortable with simple arthroscopic surgery such as arthroscopic decompression, but who also wish to make the transition to reconstructive surgery. As Dr Gartsman states “if you perform fewer than 20 to 30 shoulder procedures per year….. I would not advise investing the time and effort to do these few procedures arthroscopically”. The corollary is self-evident. This book transmits Dr Gartsman’s arthroscopic techniques and skills, which are broken down into easy to follow steps. It is also a beautifully produced book with many high-quality arthroscopic photographs, and an accompanying DVD.

In the first of three parts, suture management, knot tying, instruments, set-up and normal arthroscopy are covered. In section two, Dr Gartsman’s views on dislocation are conveyed to the reader as are the surgical techniques, which include rotator interval closure and posterior suture repair. This is often difficult to achieve in a book on rapidly evolving techniques, given the delay from publication. In this section three more chapters are ground-breaking: the biceps, peri-articular cysts and, a favourite of mine, arthroscopic release for frozen shoulder.

Many surgeons will buy this book solely for the next hundred pages, which are devoted to arthroscopic surgery of the rotator cuff. This section is richly illustrated and based upon evidence. It is written by a surgeon who not only talks about surgery but also performs it. Dr Gartsman conveys his message well. He writes carefully, advocating his strongly-held views in a manner that can cause no offence. For the shoulder surgeon making the transition to arthroscopic work it is mandatory reading. You will find two decades of Dr Gartsman’s life work beautifully produced, superbly illustrated and with an accompanying DVD, all for £130.

T. Bunker

Hand surgery
Edited by R. A. Berger and A.-P. C. Weiss

This new two-volume text of hand and wrist surgery by Richard A. Berger and Arnold-Peter C. Weiss will certainly provide a viable alternative to Green’s “Operative Hand Surgery.”

Edited by two of America’s leading contemporary hand surgeons, more than 150 surgeons, physicians and therapists contributed to its content. The authors, of whom two-thirds are American and one-third are of other nationalities, include a plethora of recognised pioneers and masters of their own particular areas of expertise. The book is competitively priced at just over £200, marginally cheaper than Green’s work. It comes in two hard-bound, reasonably portable volumes. More than 100 chapters clearly subdivide the content into bite-size pieces, with clear subtitles and illustrations throughout the text to make for accessible and inviting reading.

The book opens with chapters on basic pathology, followed by anaesthesia, imaging and hand therapy. It is commendable that rehabilitation therapy is given its rightful position of importance, in the early part of the book. Trauma is comprehensively covered from the phalanges to the shafts of the radius and ulna, including both acute and chronic wrist instability. There is an interesting chapter on radioulnar dissociation, an often neglected area. A well-illustrated section on arthroscopy of the wrist follows and the script then moves on to tendon injuries, nerve injuries and nerve compression syndromes. The second volume covers burns and soft-tissue reconstruction, rheumatoid and osteoarthritis, congenital disorders, tumours and hand infections. A comprehensive review of wrist arthroplasty is included, as well as an interesting and useful chapter on wrist joint denervation.

‘Hand Surgery’ shares some of the pitfalls of many large, multi-authored texts. While some chapters are excellent others have weaknesses. A few reflect too strongly the view of the author of the chapter. I encountered difficulty in locating a specific subject within the 2800-page tome. Being shorter than Green’s there are some significant economies in detail and content, for example elbow arthroscopy and joint contractures. But ‘Hand surgery’ is an exciting new publication for the hand surgeon, which will complement Green’s as a comprehensive reference text.

S. Fulilove

In the September issue of JBJS (2004;86-B:1091) the impression was wrongly given that John Silver’s book The history of the treatment of spinal injuries was written jointly with Sir Roger Bannister, whereas he actually wrote the foreword.