BOOK REVIEW

Pioneers in Surgical Gastroenterology, 2006.
Gillison W, Buchwald H. TFM Publishing, Harley,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY5 6LX, United Kingdom.
ISBN 1-903378-35-4, 348 pages. US \$101.91, UK £52.05

Pioneers in Surgical Gastroenterology is an account of individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of gastrointestinal surgery. The chapters are short and easy to read. The quotations and historical details are well referenced. There are excellent photographs and illustrations throughout the book. Each chapter starts from the earliest documentation of the topic of interest and gradually makes its way to the 21st century to describe the relevance of history to today's practice of surgery. In chapters in which an individual has made significant contributions, the authors have included an extended biography of the individual at the end. The authors have attempted to reconcile synchronous documentation of advances in surgery.

Chapter 1 deals with the early origins of surgery and anatomy. The chapter recounts the establishment of schools and colleges of surgery, and the eventual separation of surgeons and barbers into distinct professions. It also describes the difficult and dangerous path of many early anatomists, who were driven by curiosity and the search for truth. The bibliographic footnote on the life of Vesalius, the father of anatomy, is quite enjoyable, filled with interesting facts about his life. Chapter 2 documents the evolution of anaesthesia and its impact on the development and advancement of surgery. Chapter 3 describes

the contributions of Pasteur, Lister, Wells and several others to wound antisepsis and aseptic practices. The remainder of the book chapters are organized along anatomical lines, starting with operations on the esophagus and proceeding through colon and rectal surgery. There is an entire chapter devoted to the history and development of bariatric surgery. A detailed description of each bypass procedure including the various modifications, the successes and failures of each procedure are outlined. Throughout the book, a description of the origins of named syndromes is included to enlighten the reader. The Appendix is a compilation of short biographies of selected surgeons with highlights of their noted accomplishments.

The authors acknowledge bias in the selection of individuals included, but this does not detract from the book. The book does not aim to be comprehensive, but serves its purpose to stimulate further reading. The targeted audience for the book is the surgical trainee who wishes to know the origins of modern day surgical principles and practices. It will also be useful to the professor, consultant or senior surgeon who wants to add interesting facts to presentations, lectures or ward rounds. This book will be an enjoyable read for trainees and surgeons who are interested in the history of surgery and would be a wonderful addition to any surgeon's library.

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