relative roles of pulse oximetry and skin electrodes in monitoring oxygenation both with and without an indwelling arterial catheter. There are too many abbreviations; 77 are listed in the glossary.

The publishers claim it is the first book to deal specifically with the baby under 1000 g. This book would be enjoyed by any paediatrician who looks after very preterm babies.

B W LLOYD
Consultant paediatrician

Celebration. By Margaret Spufford. (Pp 121: £2.95 paperback.) Collins, 1989. ISBN 0-00-627449-8.

This is a remarkable book. Written by the mother, it describes the discovery and progress of the daughter's cystinosis and the mother's own agonisingly painful idiopathic osteoporosis. It shows the need despite these afflictions to provide as loving and as normal a family environment both for the son's childhood and one in which, despite the family's extra tribulations, the father could function and work as the breadwinner. It is written with the impartial clarity of her profession as an academic historian. Even when describing severe stress and extreme suffering there are discerning and important observations about the medical world including occasions when despite the most stressful circumstances, the family could see with wry humour the absurdity of the predicaments in which they found themselves.

While the doctors sought to establish the diagnosis of cystinosis in her daughter by a series of invasive tests 'now I discovered, as I held a baby who was increasingly only capable of screaming "Mummy" that my instinct to defend her threatened to override my instinct to protect her in the long term, and therefore to get a diagnosis'. 'We were long past wanting her to live at any cost for possessive reasons, because we had so much wanted this child. What was intolerable was watching her learn fear'. 'She learned fast. I am never going to be able to forget the sound of her screams'.

It is of the greatest importance at this time when reorganisation of the NHS is being considered to listen to Dr Margaret Spufford when she says 'I have come seriously to doubt whether life should be sustained when it can only be done through massive and repeated medical intervention, especially when there is no community care, apart from the family, to which these young adults can suitably move on'. It is a message of the greatest medical and social significance that this girl, who on three occasions had been prevented from dying by major medical procedures, had in her adolescence become friendless, and acutely lonely. Sadly the parents realised that while they had been able to help a baby and a small child that they were much less able to help a girl of 18. They realised that she had lost her peer group as a result of the innate effects of the disease and of too much isolating medical experience. 'By definition she needed such a group above all things. As parents we had become less resilient to conquer the next obstacle in our fifties than in our early thirties. We had learned by now that there always is a next obstacle'.

Why then call her experiences 'Celebration'? In this short review it is not possible to describe the difficult pathway by which Dr Margaret Spufford reached the stage when she could see that the family's experiences con-

tained genuine achievement and reason for celebration as well as so much pain and suffering.

While this book describes how one individual family won through and how her religious faith was crucial to the mother's personal contribution, there is help here for people of many different beliefs as well as practical advice for both those needing care and those who provide it whether they are religious or non-religious. This is an important book for all those involved with medical ethics as well as those concerned with the future of our health services both inside and outside hospitals.

F BRIMBLECOMBE
Honorary professor of child health

Health. By the children of Walsall.

This little booklet was written by children of varying ethnic origins who attend a school in Walsall. It deals with their reports of their illnesses and accidents: it reveals their attitudes, priorities, and imagination.

The first priority would appear to be 'How many days off school for this'—they can tell you almost to the day!

Heroism—its here. 'I fell down my grandad's stairs—a four inch nail went through my head. Nobody knew for three weeks'. You'd have thought they would have noticed when combing her hair!

Misfortune—'When I was two, I was crying because I had fallen over. My mother took me upstairs to cheer me up. After a while I fell downstairs'. Shades of Gerard Hoffnung!

Attention to detail—'Over in America I had an accident in a car, I went in the car and I put my gear on and the car started to move. It hit a restaurant'.

Frustration—'When I was born, I turned blue. For two weeks I was stuck in an incubator with half a plant pot on my head'. The seeds of an idea?

Children as therapists: tummy upset—'Drink brandy and wine and go to the toilet' (seems like a good idea!) and warts—'Rub some bacon on it'. Lumps—'If I had lumps, I will go to the doctor and get some medicine and lie down. In two days I will feel better'. Such precision. Something in my eye—'I would tell my brother to blow it'. Why? What had he done wrong? Cannot sleep—'I imagine a sheep and I say this sheep is green, it is 11 years old it is 7 stones and its name is Samantha and I just close my eyes when I'm saying it'.

We should all read this booklet. It is refreshing, joyful, and unstuffy. It reaffirmed my decision to look after children.

G MCCLURE
Consultant paediatrician

Paediatric Hepatology. By Stuart Tanner. (Current Reviews in Paediatrics.) (Pp 363; £29.50 hardback.) Churchill Livingstone, 1989. ISBN 0-443-03393-5.

This latest edition in the series of *Current Reviews in Paediatrics* published by Churchill Livingstone aims, along with the preceding editions, to provide an overview of a current topic relevant to acute care paediatrics. These books are published by single authors and represent the experience of someone at the forefront of the field. In this sense Dr Stuart Tanner is a more than suitable choice for this particular edition.

The book starts with a description of the assessment of liver function, including both physical examination and history taking, and the current developments in biochemical investigation and imaging. The chapter is a well drawn out introduction to the topic and contains many of the latest advances that are currently available. The succeeding chapters are of particular relevance to neonatologists in the dealing of both cholestatic jaundice and hepatitis in the neonate and infant. These are set out in an extremely practical way and furnished with a lot of useful, up to date references and quick and easy to follow tables. The section on hepatitis has at last made clear to me the complexities of antigen and antibody rises and falls and their aid in the diagnosis of, particularly, hepatitis B infections and have certainly cleared up several of the problems surrounding hepatitis B screening in the antenatal population.

The latter part of the book deals successfully with metabolic diseases, more specifically Reye's syndrome, and the role of trace elements within the liver. In this section Dr Tanner has done an excellent job in calming the fears of the non-biochemists among us in providing a suitable and easily readable account of some of the more complex disorders of enzyme deficiencies within hepatology and I certainly found this section very helpful.

After the discussion of topics including cystic fibrosis, liver failure and cirrhosis, the book ends with a chapter on the current state of play in liver transplantation. This is an extremely important chapter with the current focus of media attention upon liver transplantation in young children and, in my opinion, almost justifies the reading of the book. The latest figures are presented in an easily accessible way and both the complications and indications for liver transplantation are well set out.

In conclusion, Dr Stuart Tanner, in producing the latest addition to this series has kept up the excellent tradition maintained by his predecessors. The book is moderately priced and as such should be available in most general paediatric departments and is certainly well worth reading for those people about to embark on the Membership examination.

N MEADOWS
Consultant paediatrician

Surfactant Replacement Therapy. Edited by Donald L Shapiro, Robert H Notter. (Pp 321: \$69.50 hardback.) Alan R Liss, 1989, ISBN 0-8451-4281-X.

In the past few years a deluge of knowledge of surfactant has opened on the unwary, jobbing paediatrician. The effect has been to excite, confuse, and alarm but, most importantly, to expose our ignorance. This volume of over 300 pages sets out to rectify this last problem while maintaining our excitement; these aims have happily been achieved.

The volume consists of two sections dealing with the fundamentals of lung surfactant and the clinical aspects of surfactant replacement therapy. The first is probably of more interest to the clinician as this is the area with which we are less familiar. Some little part will be above the heads of most of us but most is written lucidly and, whereas the subject is complicated, the reader will finish with a profound knowledge of the complexity of the subject.