resonance imaging, nuclear medicine and digital vascular imaging are equally impressive.

Faced with such an array of investigation, a logical choice can be difficult. Of course the local radiologists will help by knowing the capabilities of their own equipment. Nevertheless another informed view, to be contemplated at leisure, can do no harm and may well put a different point of view, if such guidance is available. *Imaging in Internal Medicine* can be recommended without hesitation as Robert L. Siegle of the Medical Centre of San Antonio, Texas and his team of contributors go a long way towards acting as effective guides through the present maze of diagnostic procedures. Housestaff, radiologists in training and, dare one add, physicians should find this text extremely useful. Unlike the proverbial Texan product, it is quite modest in size, very modest in price and obviously good value for money.

L. Kreel

*Department of Diagnostic
Radiology and Organ Imaging,
Faculty of Medicine,
The Chinese University 1,
Hong Kong.*

Just a Word Doctor, Bernard J. Freedman. Pp. xii + 131, illustrated. Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1987. £4.95 (paperback)

This paperback is subtitled 'A light-hearted guide to medical terms'. It consists of delightful essays first published in the *British Medical Journal* between 1977 and 1986; sometimes updated, corrected or rewritten but still just as enjoyable. The origin of medical terms is always a nightmare to anybody other than a classical scholar, and also to most medical students nowadays. Once the medical term is explained, as in this little book, then out bubble many pleasurable facets of disorders, investigations, therapeutics and other day-to-day usages. It is really a bedside pleasure book, which the reader can dip into at leisure. To make this easier there is a general index and also an index of foreign words; both are most helpful etymological sources. The author has enjoyed plunging into the depths of the Oxford English Dictionary and he also acknowledges the advice of many experts, linguists, anthropologists, anatomists, and an expert in hieroglyphs amongst them. There is a particularly felicitous acknowledgement to Digitus Medius Dexter for typing this work. This book is recommended for students of any age and every discipline.

D.G. James

*149 Harley Street,
London W1N 1HG.*

Manual of Cardiology, K.D. Dawkins. Pp. 318, illustrated. Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh, London, Melbourne, New York, 1987. £11.95.

This pocket-sized manual of cardiology was written as a practical guide for students and junior medical staff, and

it has achieved its purpose admirably for the graduate but I think it is perhaps too detailed and technical in parts for the student, e.g. myocardial scintigraphy in coronary disease, technique of coronary arteriography and angioplasty, to cite two examples.

This little book is packed full of useful practical information and, although the author apologises in the foreword for his 'didactic' approach, it is a commendably balanced approach which is successful in giving a fair and up-to-date view of cardiological thinking in a number of areas where differences of opinion exist, e.g. surgical intervention in coronary artery disease, classification of cardiomyopathy, medical vs surgical treatment of pulmonary embolism. The sections on symptoms and signs in various conditions are particularly good, but the author does have a regrettable tendency to advise 'routine' haematology and biochemistry in a number of conditions where these tests are unlikely to be helpful in diagnosis or management, e.g. aortic dissection.

What about criticisms? The major criticism is in the actual format and presentation of the book. The rather small print is often dense and tightly packed in pages unrelieved by adequate headings, illustrations or tables. The tables themselves are generally poor and usually placed at the bottom of the page in even smaller print bunched up on the left side of the page. They are difficult to read and sometimes left me slightly bemused, e.g. Table 5.1 on the causes of pulmonary oedema (page 91). There are one or two other minor criticisms of content: embolism is not mentioned as a possible important complication of mitral valve prolapse, the alternative explanation for 'reciprocal' ST depression in myocardial infarction – multivessel disease – is not considered and the rarity of the 'Austin Flint' murmur not pointed out to the unsuspecting student who hears a mitral stenotic murmur in a patient with aortic incompetence.

These criticisms aside, this is an excellent practical little book on up-to-date cardiological thinking in a number of common cardiac conditions for both hospital doctors and general practitioners, as well as senior students. Not the least of its merits is its modest price, particularly when compared with the more expensive cardiological tomes on both sides of the Atlantic.

G. Sandler

*Department of Medicine,
Barnsley District General Hospital,
Barnsley, Yorks.*

Medicines in the Marketplace, D.G. Green. Pp. xii + 80. The IEA Health Unit, London, 1987. £5.95.

This is an interesting contribution to the current debate on changes which should be made to our health system. It proposes two major changes in the present compulsory system of licensing of medicines, and financing their use. Firstly, legislative restraints and control on the introduction of medicines should be replaced by a voluntary system, the responsibility for their use devolving to a much greater extent on patients who would, or would not, give their informed consent to treatment after full explanation of the risk-benefit issues involved from better