Synopsis of Ophthalmology, Sixth Edition, Jack J. Kanski. Pp. xi + 237. Butterworths, London, Boston, Singapore, Sydney, Toronto, Wellington, 1990. £14.95.

The 6th edition of Jack Kanski's '*Synopsis*' is extensively revised and in 15 chapters and 237 pages presents a concentrated distillate of the broad range of ophthalmology. Some of the chapters present diseases of the eye and orbit according to anatomical position whilst others address particular diseases or groups of diseases, e.g., uveitis, the glaucomas and retinal detachment.

The presentation is clear and concise and the style easy to read. For each condition the cause, clinical features, signs and complications are considered together with clear guidelines for treatment. The sections dealing with orbital disease, uveitis, retinal vascular disorders and neuro-ophthalmology will be of particular interest to the non-ophthalmologist to whom ophthalmology is often a worrying mystery.

As minor criticisms for the next edition I would suggest inclusion of the principles involved in calculation of intraocular lens power and expansion of the section on refractive corneal surgery to include surgery for astigmatism and the excimer corneal laser. But these do not detract from the value of this excellent book which should be in every hospital library and which I recommend as a revision aid to both ophthalmologists and general physicians in training.

Jeffrey S. Hillman
St James's University Hospital,
Leeds LS9 7TF.

ABC of Resuscitation, 2nd Edition, edited by T.R. Evans. Pp. x + 72, illustrated. British Medical Journal, London, 1990. Paperback UK £6.90/Overseas £9.

As an undergraduate or junior doctor it is all too easy to become engrossed in the small print of medical text-books in preparation for examinations, and to overlook the importance of basic practical procedures and routines involved in resuscitation. The welcome inclusion of life support techniques in these examinations and training curricula should hopefully provide candidates with a level of skills and abilities to match the increasing awareness of the importance of resuscitation in medical practice.

The book contains 18 chapters, edited by T.R. Evans, the Chairman of the UK Resuscitation Council; each provides a concise review of a wide range of resuscitation topics and procedures both outside and within hospital confines. The layout of each chapter enables important facts to be stressed, and the use of multiple charts, illustrations, check lists and drills makes reading a far more enjoyable and informative pursuit than forbidding pages of dense script.

Two of the three new articles in this second edition cover resuscitation in pregnancy and trauma victims; the current awareness of AIDS and hepatitis transmission risks during resuscitation has provoked the third new chapter by Dr Zideman which also includes reference to a wide range of literature on the subject. With respect to problems encountered in pregnancy, the average SHO on a resuscitation team is infrequently exposed to work on an obstetric unit, a place where lack of awareness, or

mishandling of an acute life-threatening event can have such devastating effects. This excellent article along with those covering neonatal and paediatric resuscitation emphasizes the physiological, anatomical and metabolic differences in these three groups of patients, and should alert the conscience of any potential member of a resuscitation team to become acquainted with the different equipment and requirements involved. They are a fitting tribute to the lifetime's work done in this field by Dr K.W. Cross, who died recently. Other important facets such as proper organization of a resuscitation room, and cardiac arrest team, the maintenance and updating of skills, and continued training are again included. The discrepancy between subjective and objective competence in performing resuscitation is emphasized. This is important, since the ability of the first person 'on the scene' to institute adequate cardiopulmonary resuscitation frequently determines the outcome and quality of long term survival.

The indiscriminate use of bicarbonate and calcium is discussed several times. To quote Mr Redmond 'more brains are damaged from inadequate than inappropriate resuscitation'. His article along with Andrew Marsden's emphasizes the necessity for an organized approach in the A & E department; I would, however, disagree with the latter author on the use of steroids in smoke inhalation and near drowning.

Despite more rigorous training and awareness of the need to improve our resuscitation skills, we should however not forget the ethics involved – the topic discussed in the final chapter by the president of the World Association for Emergency and Disaster Medicine, Dr Peter Baskett.

This publication should be read, digested and on the bookshelves of all individuals likely to encounter an emergency situation, both medical and paramedical, inside and outside hospital – at £6.45 there is no excuse.

R. Mayall
Department of Anaesthesia,
University of Manchester,
Withington Hospital,
Manchester M20 8LR.

A Researcher's Guide to Scientific and Medical Illustrations, edited by T.D. Brock. Pp. xi + 210, illustrated. Springer-Verlag, Berlin, New York, London, 1990. Paperback DM38.00.

'Good planning can save time and money and result in easily understood, and interesting figures. Thoughtful planning is the most important part of an illustration'. This author in essence sets out to give good practical advice to anyone preparing scientific and medical illustration. From 'what to illustrate, how much information is needed, to finding out about the viewer and media requirements' are good leaders.

Emphasis is given to what kind of illustration is most suited, be it drawings, diagrams, photographs, charts or tables. Good advice is given on communicating with the professional illustrator. Originators of data may be surprised just how effective this can be. For researchers preparing their own visual artwork from statistical data there are useful tips on determining how best this should be presented.