

General Anaesthesia

Fourth edition
Volume 1

T. Cecil Gray,
John F. Nunn,
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Butterworths

London Boston
Sydney Wellington Durban Toronto

United Kingdom London	Butterworth & Co (Publishers) Ltd 88 Kingsway, WC2 6AB
Australia Sydney	Butterworths Pty Ltd 586 Pacific Highway, Chatsworth, NSW 2067 Also at Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Perth
Canada Toronto	Butterworth & Co (Canada) Ltd 2265 Midland Avenue, Scarborough, Ontario, M1P 4S1
New Zealand Wellington	Butterworths of New Zealand Ltd T & W Young Building, 77-85 Customhouse Quay, 1, CPO Box 472
South Africa Durban	Butterworth & Co (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd 152-154 Gale Street
USA Boston	Butterworth (Publishers) Inc 10 Tower Office Park, Woburn, Massachusetts 01801

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First published 1959

Second edition 1965

Third edition 1971

Reprinted 1974

© Butterworth & Co (Publishers) Ltd, 1980

ISBN 0 407 00144 1 individual volume

0 407 00146 8 set of two volumes

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

General anaesthesia — 4th ed.

I. Anaesthesia

I. Gray, Thomas Cecil II. Nunn, John Francis

III. Utting, J E

617'.96 RD81 79-42889

ISBN 0-407-00146-8 Set

ISBN 0-407-00144-1 (Vol. 1)

ISBN 0-407-00145-X (Vol. 2)

Typeset by Butterworths Litho Preparation Department
Origination by Adroit Photolitho Ltd, Birmingham
Printed and bound by Wm Clowes & Sons Ltd, London and Beccles

Preface to the fourth edition

It is eight years since the publication of the third edition of this work. The fact that it is still in demand may be taken as a tribute to the foresight and contemporary approach of the authors. However, anaesthesia has not stood still and it would be generally agreed that a new edition is required.

It is interesting that over these years the 'comprehensive' text has more than held its own against the specialized monograph. Indeed, the pendulum of taste and student opinion seems to have swung rather more toward it. The qualified specialist no less than the student often prefers one book for reference rather than a library.

This edition comprises mostly new material and involves many new authors. By reinserting chapters on 'Anaesthesia for . . .' there is rather more emphasis on practical aspects than in previous editions but, the Editors hope, with no detriment to the theoretical basis of practice. Experience in the medicolegal field persuades one that it is fault in practice and slackness in technique which result in disaster more often than does lack of theoretical knowledge.

As its title implies, this work is concerned primarily with 'General Anaesthesia', but we have come to believe that there must be some reference to local and regional anaesthesia. We have aimed to indicate the theoretical background of these techniques, their indications and their dangers, rather than to provide a detailed exposition of nerve block techniques, which are so well described elsewhere.

Intensive therapy has now become an essential field of activity for anaesthetists and Professor John Utting is warmly welcomed as having a special responsibility for this section of the work. Indeed, he has played a large part in determining principles and in the planning of the whole.

Once again the Editors have allowed different styles of presentation. It seems desirable that within acceptable limits authors should be given freedom to express their views in the way they think best. Some of the authors also prefer not to use detailed references but to indicate the bibliographic sources which they have used. The Editors have respected this viewpoint.

We are greatly indebted to all our authors, all of whom are fully occupied with their professional work and must find it difficult to give time to contribute in this way to the literature. May they find reward for their effort in the help that these volumes will give to anaesthetists all over the world, both those established and those training in their specialty.

Finally, we are grateful to the Publishers and especially to the staff who have been closely connected with this work and have throughout been helpful and co-operative.

This will be the final edition for the senior Editor who with complete confidence hands on this work, which he inherited from the late Dr Frankis Evans, to those who have played the greater part in bringing to fruition this present edition.

July 1979

TCG. JFN

Preface to the first edition

The editors approached the task of revising *Modern Practice in Anaesthesia* and of bringing it up to date with trepidation. The field of anaesthesia is expanding so widely and developments are taking place so rapidly that a 'textbook' appeared impracticable. Up to now the student has had to rely on a series of special monographs, many excellent examples of which have been published over the last few years. Yet those of us who deal with postgraduate students are aware that the need is still felt for a book suitable for both study and reference and as comprehensive as it is practicable to make it. This accounts for the considerable popularity of a famous synopsis. We present these two volumes on *General Anaesthesia*, therefore, hoping to fill this need.

Accepted authorities on the various aspects of medicine touching on anaesthetic practice have written on their special subjects. Such diverse authorship must lead inevitably to varying literary styles and modes of presentation, and in many places emphasis is achieved by the overlapping of text between two chapters; this emphasis is intended to drive home the important points and teaching. A variety of views are expressed on some subjects or techniques. Here we have permitted freedom of expression where the teaching propounded would be acceptable to a reasonable body of opinion — even though we ourselves were not always in agreement. When necessary the authors have been asked to incorporate at least some reference to other acceptable points of view.

An early decision was taken to omit detailed consideration of local anaesthetics. This field is amply covered elsewhere.

One further point which has concerned us is the place of anatomy and physiology in a textbook of anaesthesia. In these basic sciences the knowledge demanded of the modern anaesthetist is so extensive that it would appear as if only the original textbooks would cover the ground. However, we feel that there is a place for chapters dealing in detail with many specialized parts of these subjects, knowledge of which is of immediate importance to anaesthetists in their everyday work. The chapters on physiology and anatomy were written with this guiding principle in mind.

The chapter on neurophysiology is by design somewhat more comprehensive, as this information is not readily available to anaesthetists, especially those who are not within reach of a medical library.

We would like to acknowledge our gratitude to our Publishers for their assistance. We are deeply indebted and most grateful to all those who, despite the pressure of their own work and publications, have added to the value of these pages by the teaching and wisdom contained in their contributions.

September 1959

Frankis T. Evans

T. Cecil Gray

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