This book contains the tackling this times treatment techniques. J. Editors: Publisher: Springer-Verlag, (in branch of Title: MANUAL MEDICINE Dr. Philip Swann 1984 ISBN Author: Race Horse Sportsmedicine and Scientific Conditioning, PO Box 12, DOREEN, Victoria 3754, Australia Price: $Aust. 20 + 5 p. & p. 145 pages Soft cover Illustrated with half-tone photographs

This book is written essentially for the trainer of Australian and American flat race and trotting race horses, but the information given could be of value to the British trainer, point-to-point or hunter owner, and to those in European centres of trotting such as Austria.

The author applies the technique of modern human athletic training, based on muscle and cardio-respiratory physiology, to the training of the elite equine "athlete," an approach long overdue. He compares the 7%-15% improvement in human athletics in the past 25 years with only 1%-3% in equine performance. Anaerobic training is described using heart rate monitoring to aim at increasing speed with a heart rate of around 150 beats a minute (from a pre-exercise level of 35) and heart-rate meters are now available. The 150/min HR reaches the anaerobic threshold. More specific schedules are given to develop slow-twitch muscle fibres by distance work, then strenuous pace work to increase speed and stamina at steady state, developing fast-twitch fibres, and finally speed work, largely anaerobic, at HR > 150, by interval training. Horses, however, unlike humans, should not be trained to exhaustion. Special types of training, such as swimming, especially in rehabilitation after injury, are mentioned. The physiological reasons for the schedules are given in terms that should easily be understood by the layman.

Diet is discussed in detail, but the hundredweight of grain each eight to ten days needed for the race horse is beyond the pocket of the recreational rider, nor is it really necessary in this quantity. The chapter on drugs has several weaknesses, or rather missed opportunities. The author, although mentioning adverse effects of doping, fails to state that in international rules of racing even a trace of a prohibited drug is enough to have the horse banned, and the presence of theobromine from a chocolate tilt-bit or from cattle cake made from chocolate-bean husks fed to point-to-pointers has led to heavy penalties.

This book is recommended to the owner of a competition horse, whether a point-to-point hunter or a child's gymkhana pony, as few doctors or physiotherapists own a race horse, though many are concerned with horses and ponies in some sort of training. To the non-horse owner the action photographs include some of dramatic accidents, illustrating the aetiology of human injuries. The need for better head protection is stressed. I am only sorry that this book was not written before my stable and paddock were empty. My daughter would have found it of considerable value.

H. E. Robson

BOOK REVIEW

Title: RACE HORSE TRAINING AND FEEDING
Author: Dr. Philip Swann 1984 ISBN 0-9590433-0-6
Publisher: Race Horse Sportsmedicine and Scientific Conditioning, PO Box 12, DOREEN, Victoria 3754, Australia

This book contains the results of a seminar held in Fischingen, Switzerland, attended by 32 international specialists in Manual Medicine (in this context a combination of osteopathic medical practice and the latest American concept of muscle energy treatment techniques as propounded by Philip Greenman, D.O. Michigan State University).

It attempts to define treatment terminology such as ‘mobilisation’ and ‘manipulation’, and offer a multinational view, at times not only at variance but also at opposite extremes to each other, of a large number of examination and ‘manipulative’ procedures directed to the spine. A basic knowledge and groundwork in osteopathic practice is, in my view, essential before tackling this book, which is in danger of convincing the uninstructed of the requirement for “peaceful co-existence” in this branch of medicine as well as in East-West political confrontation in the 1980’s.

For those with basic grounding in Manual Medicine the wide range of techniques demonstrated will add an interesting dimension though strictly in an osteopathic sense, without any direction towards other managements such as traction or injections.

M. A. Hutson