One naturally mourns for the single handed authority of the late Sheila Sherlock in her famous textbook. But one has to accept that the extraordinary growth of Hepatology since then demanded a greater pool of contributing expertise.

James Dooley who co-authored the last three editions with Sheila, for this new 12th edition has brought in three additional editors – Anna Lock from the United States, Andrew Burroughs from the United Kingdom, and Jenny Heathcote from Canada.

They have overseen a large team of outstanding experts covering the whole of Hepatology as it is today. Many of the contributors were trained or had worked with Sheila at different times and coming as it were from the same mould have maintained that didactic approach of presentation that brought it – the book such success over its 50 years of its existence. “An accurate source to relevant information from students to specialist physicians” is how it is described in the Preface of this new volume.

The clarity of figures and tables has always been a hallmark of the book and the production team at Wiley-Blackwell is to be congratulated on the standards obtained. The superb artwork evident in the first chapter of J Lefkowitch on anatomy and function, is as exciting as is the text. In fact, whichever chapter one dips into one wants to continue reading.
It is invidious to pick out chapters, the new one on hepatic fibrogenesis by Scott Freidman makes light of scientific complexities and is truly informative. Those by Andrew Burroughs on portal hypertension, Marsha Morgan’s on encephalopathy, Jenny Heathcote on autoimmune disease and Anna Lock on hepatitis B, and the editors contributions are outstanding authoritative accounts, reflecting the vast clinical experience as well as research contributions in these areas.

They are useful contributions on the special topics including the liver and systemic disease, and the liver in pregnancy which will prove useful to clinicians facing individual clinical problems. The hepatic transplantation chapter has been extended reflecting the importance of this form of therapy in current hepatological practice.

James Dooley it to be congratulated on his courage and dedication along with his clearly inspiring leadership to contributing authors has not allowed Sheila’s volume to die with her passing. The Hepatology world, has been given a thoroughly up-to-date, exciting and cleverly produced volume which competitors will have greatest difficulty in matching.

*Professor Roger Williams, CBE*