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To the best of my knowledge I have never met Fran Brown but I think I would like to! If this book reflects her personality and style then she will be engaging, energetic and eclectic in her interests. The second edition of *The New Public Health* provides a comprehensive and broad ranging introduction to public health or at least to that area of public health that is particularly involved in improving health status and reducing inequalities in health outcomes. I make this point simply because the book does not, and does not intend to, spend much time dealing with issues of health protection or the applied epidemiology of healthcare management.

What it does do, and does well, is to explore in the broadest and most inclusive way holistic pathways to health improvement. Thus qualitative research methods, community capacity building and globalisation receive relatively more attention than epidemiological method or health service organisation. I particularly enjoyed her exploration of the beneficial use of case study methodology although I think perhaps her section on the limitations of epidemiology could have been strengthened by at least detailing the contribution that systematic reviews can play in limiting the limitations.

This is a book that does not fear being contemporary and indeed forward looking and as such it is one that I would

encourage all those embarking on training in public health to read. In that regard although it is written from an Australian perspective its horizons are broad and I would suggest that it is worthwhile for UK students of public health at undergraduate, postgraduate and professional levels. Diagrams are used sparingly but effectively and some of the photographs are particularly striking (for example on page 212 a laughing group of office workers step over a comatose homeless individual on the street whilst on page 300 the caption 'another victim of recent war' sits atop a picture of a young child carrying a gun).

The book which runs to some 600 pages in the soft back edition is well referenced and there is a useful list of appropriate websites. I suppose my only caveat was the title. To me public health involves the three domains of health protection, health promotion and health recovery (or health service development if you prefer) and I think this book only seeks to cover in any depth health promotion. However, the fact that it does what it sets out to do so well and perhaps the fact that it prefaces public health with 'the new' justifies the use of this title. After all Fran Brown may be right. Perhaps the new public health will confine itself to health promotion and health improvement. You couldn't really title a book 'Holistic Pathways to Health Improvement' – could you!

**PD DONNELLY**

# NEW TITLES



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AJ Cronin wrote a classical account of life in general practice in a poor Welsh mining area. David Illingworth's journals similarly are a wonderful account of an exacting experience in medical practice, Leith Hospital, the Royal Navy in an anti-submarine frigate, the Western General Hospital and General Practice in south Edinburgh. He observes with a keen eye and ready wit. Yet throughout some very varied even harrowing times he is always courteous and gentle. He was convinced after the navy that life was only a series of uncontrollable happy accidents – one long happenchance. He describes the joys of training with Dickie Turner. Throughout his many years in General Practice the benefits of knowing one's patients rings out. His MD thesis and transfer to preventive medicine were rewarded by a lecture tour of the United States, where sometimes he was mistaken for Sir Charles Illingworth.

When I had finished his book, which I found compelling reading, I began to wonder what had motivated David Illingworth in his life and prompted the book. He had risked life and limb in the war and then worked himself to a frazzle in practice. What had kept him going? Answer came there none. However, the book is a wonderful essay, almost a shaggy dog story which refutes Derrick Dunlop's maxim that General Practice is Medicine of Trivialities. His conclusion is that the preservation of total health is in the stewardship of the individual. And who better to guide the individual along that path than his parish health minister, his general practitioner. This is a book to savour, to read and give to the young, would-be clinician.

**MA EASTWOOD**