Book reviews

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Human Gene Mapping 9

It is a measure of the rapid pace of advance in gene mapping that those who attended the Paris meeting of Human Gene Mapping 9 in September 1987 should have been impatiently awaiting its publication. Its arrival in May 1988 (though carrying a 1987 publication date) gives plenty of material to consult, and some to read, between now and Human Gene Mapping 9-5 and 10, held later this year and in 1989 respectively.

The sheer amount of information in this volume makes one realise how much work has gone into it; for this the organiser and publishers deserve much credit, as do the committee chairmen and the computing staff responsible for most of the contents.

The long hallowed format of division into committees for specific groups of chromosomes has held up remarkably well, though the chapter on mapping by DNA techniques comes close to being submerged by the flood of new data. The abstracts of posters give much new information though, as with all abstracts, there is a danger that they will be cited as definitive, which is often not the case.

Future organisers will have to ask for whom these volumes are intended. Until now, and including the present volume, they are written and compiled almost exclusively for the research worker in the gene mapping field. However, the pace inevitably means that these workers will be kept informed by personal contact, small workshops, and on line computerised systems. Those who really need the volume are other workers in human genetics, and the style and format are not exactly 'user friendly' for such people, whether scientists or clinical geneticists. With careful planning, Human Gene Mapping 10 could be attractive to this wider audience, without losing its value as a reference source for gene mappers.

Peter S Harper

Molecular Biology of Homo Sapiens

I am tempted to unleash a flood of superlatives about this book; instead I will simply describe it as

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