A Tribute to the Life of Dr Alan Hardy 1915–1996

Alan Hardy's name and personality will forever be associated with the early history of the care of the spinal cord injured both in Sheffield and further afield. His modesty and expertise will always be remembered by patients, their relatives and staff alike.

Alan was born into a Sheffield family of Cutlers on the 3rd of August 1915 and served his city faithfully until his death in 1996. His early school years were spent locally, then moving to Rydal School, Colwyn Bay. He began his undergraduate studies in medicine at Lincoln College, Oxford and then moved on to do his clinical work at the Middlesex Hospital in London. After qualification he became a House Surgeon to Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor in 1939.

During the Second World War he joined the RAFVR and became Medical Officer, Bomber Command, serving in this country and Europe. He rose to the rank of Squadron-Leader and was made a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) and was awarded a medal from the Belgian town of Blankenburghe. After the war he returned to Sheffield

where in 1947 he was appointed the first Medical Officer of the newly formed Ministry of Pensions Spinal Injuries Unit at Wharnccliffe Hospital. In 1954 it moved to more suitable accommodation at Lodge Moor Hospital where he worked single handed for many years. The unit expanded to 64 beds in three wards and provided acute care of the spinal injured with excellent rehabilitative facilities and a meticulous follow up service under his care as Consultant in Charge.

In common with Sir Ludwick Guttman, Alan believed fervently that sport played an integral part of the rehabilitation of paralysed patients. He was always a fervent supporter and often accompanied the teams to the national and international sporting events. As President he was a life long supporter of the very successful Lodge Moor Wheelchair Sports Club.

During his career he was honoured by many eminent professional bodies. In 1963 he was awarded the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, *ad eundem*. In 1982 he was awarded the gold medal of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia (IMSOP). He was a founder member and member of the Council of IMSOP as well as an Associate, then Assistant Editor of the journal *Paraplegia*. He was a keen supporter of the Spinal Injuries Association and became their Medical Advisor.

Alan travelled widely both as an advisor and lecturer often at the request of the British Council. His great skills as a communicator and teacher combined with his longstanding experience will be remembered worldwide by many. He published many original scientific papers and in 1975 wrote a major work with Professor Alain Rossier entitled 'Spinal Cord Injuries: Orthopaedic and Neurological Aspects'.

Alan retired in 1976 but continued his close association with the Lodge Moor Sports Club. Throughout his life he was himself a keen sportsman and maintained a strong golfing interest until illness overtook him. His golfing enthusiasm led him to the captaincy of the Sickleholme Golf Club in Bamford where the 'Hardy Oak' has been planted on the course as a fitting memorial to his support of the Lodge Moor Sports Club.

Through all his professional years Alan had the loving support of his wife Vera whom he married in 1941. They spent the first year of their married life in Hull during the blitz of that year. Alan and Vera had a daughter and son and subsequently three grandchildren. He is fondly remembered by them as a

devoted husband, father and grandfather always belying his professional reputation when at home.

In latter years Alan suffered the devastation of a progressive neurological disease and died on the fourteenth of April 1996.

Everyone associated with Alan Hardy will remember him as a kindly, dignified and modest person

whose influence on all he met was praiseworthy. In the history of the care of the spinal cord injured his name will be numbered amongst the greatest.

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