OBITUARY

WALTER GIFFORD KERR, M.B., CH.B., F.R.C.S.ED.

Mr W. G. KERR, Consultant Surgeon to the Spinal Injuries Unit at Edenhall Hospital, Musselburgh, near Edinburgh, Scotland, died suddenly on 18 April 1974. He was 59.

As a medical student he became President of the Royal Medical Society, the only Royal Undergraduate Society in the United Kingdom, and he graduated in medicine in 1937. Subsequently he gained experience in Orthopaedic Surgery in the Royal Infirmary of Edinburgh under the late Sir Walter Mercer, and in General Surgery in the Deaconess Hospital, Edinburgh. Then he became District Medical Officer to Kenya in 1939, remaining there until 1950, when he took up an appointment in Tanganyika.

Walter Kerr rapidly developed an intense interest in surgery and in particular the orthopaedic and rehabilitative aspects of physical abnormalities of the body especially those arising from poliomyelitis; and he started a rehabilitation centre in Dar-es-Salaam where he became surgeon in 1953. He received the Badge of Honour from the Red Cross for his outstanding work for the physically disabled.

In 1961 he returned to Scotland and with his special interests and aptitudes obtained an appointment in the Spinal Paralysis Unit at Edenhall Hospital in 1961.

His compassion for and his clinical and scientific interests in the disabled and his special abilities in teaching rapidly became evident and he became an expert in the whole management of the spinal paralysed patient. He was blessed with a remarkable memory for all of his patients and proved to be a most excellent co-ordinator of all members of staff, medical, nursing, remedial therapists and medical social workers, and his additional involvement with the Regional Vehicle Centre and the Limb Fitting Service in Edinburgh extended his activities in these spheres for his patients.

He introduced, in addition to his most meticulous medical case records, a coding system whereby the most vital aspects of the notes could be retrieved by a computer technique.

With his background, Walter Kerr was a first-class administrator and at the time of his death he was a member of several important medical committees. He was a Vice-President of the Scottish Paraplegic Association, and over the years he took an active part in the meetings of our Society.

He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

PHILLIP HARRIS