

Phillip Harris—A Profile

When Phillip Harris was awarded the Medal of the Society in 1985 it was universally felt that no one deserved it more.

A mere recital of his degrees, publications, experience and posts held fails to express fully his enthusiasm and dedication to his surgical practice and to the Journal.

Phillip was born in Edinburgh, receiving his education at the Royal High School, graduating at the University of Edinburgh in 1944. After Army service, when he had the opportunity of working with Sir Hugh Cairns, Sir Charles Symonds, Ritchie Russell and other notable figures in British Neurosurgery and Neurology, he returned to Edinburgh as Senior Registrar, rapidly becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1948, and a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh in 1954. In 1953 he was appointed Consultant Neurosurgeon in Edinburgh, and subsequently also Senior Lecturer in Neurosurgery in the University of Edinburgh, posts which he has held with great distinction since. As an experienced neurosurgeon he has become one of the world's authorities on lesions of the spinal cord, devoting himself particularly to the field of anterior spinal decompression and fusion, in which he has accumulated a vast experience. He also has an interest in epilepsy, carrying out both experimental and clinical research.

His current researches include cervical spine injuries, cervical intervertebral disease, facet joint disorders and the development of surgical lasers.

He has, of course, taken a special interest in the Spinal Unit at Edenhall, and is also an examiner for the Royal College of Surgeons.

Space does not permit a full account of his international activities, which include numerous visiting professorships; Phillip has also acted as adviser in setting up new spinal centres in several countries, and has recently visited India on behalf of the British Council. He is not only Senior Delegate of British Neurosurgeons to the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies but also Vice-Chairman of the Neurotraumatology Committee of the W.F.N.S. Instrumental in founding the Scottish Sports Association for Disabled, he is now their Honorary President.

A foundation member of the International Medical Society of Paraplegia, he was asked to become Assistant Editor of *Paraplegia* at its inception and, on Sir Ludwig Guttmann's death, was appointed Editor—a span of service extending over many years. His editorial work, like everything else he does, aims at perfectionism and has set the high standard reputation enjoyed by the Journal at the present time. Nothing is too much trouble, and in spite of the numerous difficulties and complications of editing an international publication, he invariably deals with all problems with courtesy and skill. Phillip has always taken the view that *Paraplegia* must act as a coordinating influence on related problems throughout the world.

In spite of all these time-consuming activities Phillip enjoys a happy family life as anyone who has had the pleasure of visiting his home in Edinburgh and meeting his charming wife can testify. His daughter is Head of Physiotherapy in the Wellington Hospital, London, and his son is a solicitor in Glasgow. Phillip also enjoys an occasional game of golf and is a member of the Edinburgh Rotary Club. It is always the busiest people who find time for these other activities.

Edinburgh and the I.M.S.O.P. may well feel proud of the latest recipient of the Medal.

J. Cosbie Ross

