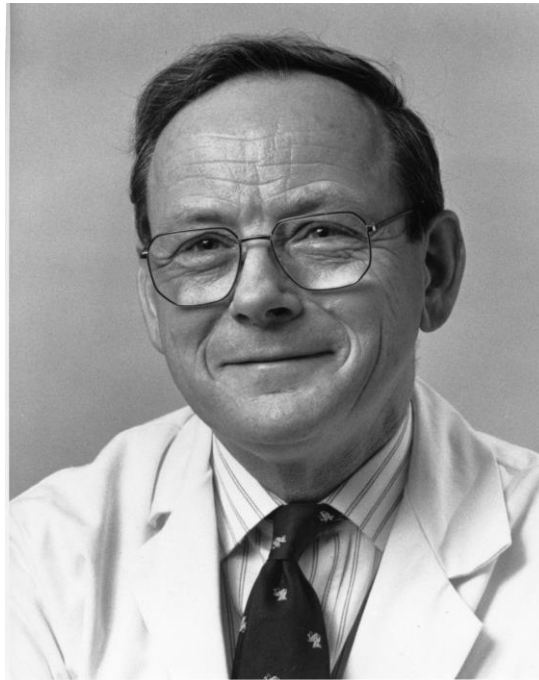


Mr John Edward Wright, Past President of ESOPRS, died on January 6th 2023, after a short illness



John Wright -- known affectionately to colleagues as “JW” -- was born in May 1933 and, with clouds of war brewing over Europe, he was evacuated and spent much of his childhood in North Wales. Learning was very much fostered in the family environment, his father being headmaster at a local school, and JW completed his grammar school years with award of the prestigious County Medical Scholarship. He attended Liverpool Medical School, where he graduated MB ChB in 1956, but also became a ‘legend’ as Captain of the University Golf Club -- with a single-figure handicap that he maintained for over 60 years!

After graduation and house-jobs, JW served a period as Captain in the Royal Army Medical Corps, before pursuing his MD studies at the University of Liverpool until 1962: his work on the hepatic vascular and biliary systems led to his first publication being in *Nature*, and contributed to the subsequent interest in liver transplantation.

JW started ophthalmic training at St Paul’s Eye unit in Liverpool, and then moved to become Resident Surgical Officer at Moorfields Eye Hospital in 1965. Within 3 years he was appointed Lecturer at the Institute of Ophthalmology and, the following year, was appointed Consultant Surgeon to St Mary’s Hospital and honorary Consultant at Moorfields -- establishing a world-leading Orbital clinic at Moorfields in the same year. JW was appointed as full consultant to Moorfields in 1973 and remained a highly influential colleague until his well-deserved retirement in 1996: to say JW was “influential” might be regarded as an understatement by many! He was a legend: a man who believed in truth and fairness;

a teacher and leader who believed in setting an example, and who would not tolerate second-best if due to laziness, rather than genuine difficulty; a colleague who cared about all aspects of his staff and patients – both their professional matters and also a fatherly concern for their family or other worries – and did so with empathy and humour.

Certainly, the early days of orbits were pioneering and JW took an international lead in this work. At that time investigations were limited to plain X-rays, and JW was a leader in the development of orbital ultrasonography, venography, polytomography, and finally the development of computerised X-ray tomography (CT). Although CT is now known everywhere, JW provided the first orbital patients for examination on the prototype EMI scanner, this being developed by Godfrey Hounsfield at a secret location in South London. Not only did JW lead the diagnostic revolution, but he developed many new and refined surgical techniques – starting at a time when the orbit was frequently operated through an unnecessarily injurious craniotomy.

John Wright always believed in teaching at National and International level, his having also trained over thirty fellows from throughout the world and presented hundreds of lectures, many eponymous and highly prestigious. This pioneering spirit was manifest in his being a leader in the founding of both the European Society of Ophthalmic Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and the Orbital Society, for both of which he has served as President. JW has been the inspiration for many publications and has written several authoritative chapters on the subject.

What is particularly remarkable is that JW achieved these legion achievements within normal working hours – his being a ‘do-er’ and abhorring wasted time. Meetings chaired by JW were orderly, had a proper agenda, and made decisions with actions to follow-up; likewise, his Orbital service ran like clockwork. He combined discipline, time-efficiency, and a strong work-ethic to achieve an enviable “work-life balance”, decades before the term became fashionable! Above all, he was a loving family man: torn by the early loss of his adored wife, Kathleen, he nevertheless lived a long and contented retirement, blighted only recently with failing health. He is survived by his children Elizabeth and John, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.