



William John Wells SHARRARD

(Lincoln, UK, 1921 – Sheffield, UK, 2001)

EPOS Founder and first EPOS President (1982-1985)

Contribution to EPOS

At the end of 1980, Henri Bensahel invited John Sharrard to create a European group with three other paediatric orthopaedic surgeons: Jürg Baumann, José Mesquita Montes, and Dietrich Tönnis. John Sharrard accepted the proposal with enthusiasm, and the decision to create a Society and to hold annual meetings was taken during a meeting at Hôpital Bretonneau, Paris, on the 31st of January 1981.

During the First official Meeting held in Paris on 13th March 1982, Henri Bensahel proposed that John become the 1st President. At the 2nd Annual Meeting which was again held at Hôpital Bretonneau on 19th of March 1983, John was elected President from 1983 to 1985.

Under Sharrard's presidency, three meetings were organized:

- The 2nd annual meeting held in Paris, Hôpital Bretonneau, on the 19th of March 1983 with Henri Bensahel as the local host. Twenty attendees represented 9 European countries.
- The 3rd annual meeting was organized by Jürg Baumann at the Kinderspital, Basel, Switzerland, on the 24th of March 1984. Thirty-one participants from 15 countries were present, and many papers were presented followed by very interesting discussion. During the General Assembly, the General Secretary announced the enlargement of the society with twelve new members. At the same time, it was decided that ten minutes would be allotted for a free paper followed by ten minutes of discussion.
- On the 16th of March 1985, Alessandro Dal Monte chaired the 4th annual meeting at the Rizzoli Institute, Bologna, Italy. Twenty free papers were presented with wide discussion. For the first time, a North American colleague, J. Bright, took part in an EPOS meeting. The General Assembly gave approval to two study groups: one about DDH treated with Pavlik harness chaired by Franz Grill, and the second about the Perthes disease conducted by Anthony Catterall. The new executive board was elected: P. Klisić (President), A. Dal Monte (Vice-President), A. Dimeglio, F. Grill, S. Ryoppy and T. Vizkelety (4 advisors). H. Bensahel and D. Tönnis continued in their position of respectively General Secretary and Treasurer.

John Sharrard was awarded Honorary Membership in 1994. In 2007 (Sorrento), the awards committee (E Ippolito, M Yazici and F Hefti) recommended the introduction of the John Sharrard Best Clinical Research Award.

Contribution to Paediatric Orthopaedics

In 1944, John Sharrard graduated with honours at the medical school of Sheffield. He completed his orthopaedic training in London, returning to Sheffield in 1955, working at the Royal Infirmary and the Children's Hospital.

In the late 40s and early 50s, he examined many cases of polio and determined what muscles were paralysed. A number subsequently died and John obtained permission from the families to look at their spinal cords. He looked at a large number of slides himself which enabled him to determine which anterior horn cells at what spinal cord level supplied which muscle (1).



His expertise became recognised internationally in orthopaedic disorders of cerebral palsy and myelomeningocele (2). In the seventies and early eighties of the last century, John Sharrard, the pediatrician John Lorber and the pediatric surgeon Robert Zachary established a spina bifida center in Sheffield with repeated Courses attracting international community. Sharrard's psoas transfer was one of his important contributions (3), and he published many papers on the treatment of the lumbar kyphosis (4), the leg, foot and hallux deformities in spina bifida.

Another interest was the treatment of osteogenesis imperfecta. On one of his many trips to USA he saw the Bailey Dubow nail being used to treat OI children. On his return he raised money from a national charity to purchase the system. His initial experience with the system identified a number of complications so John and his team approached a local instrument maker in Sheffield called Downs and between them they came up with the design of the Sheffield rod. The first rods were inserted in 1984 (5).

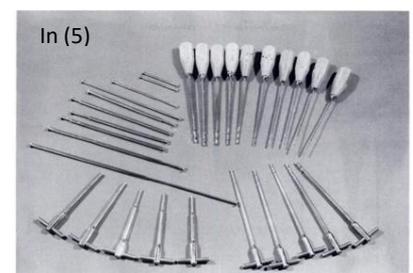
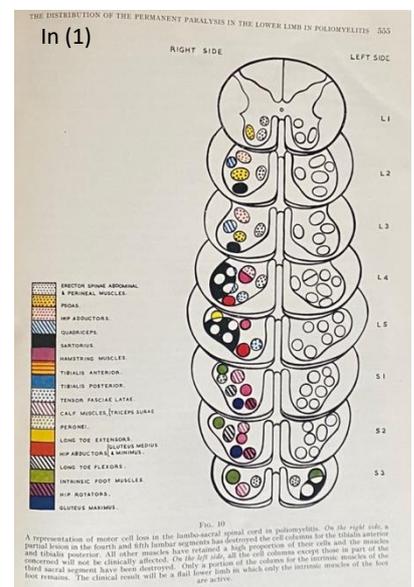
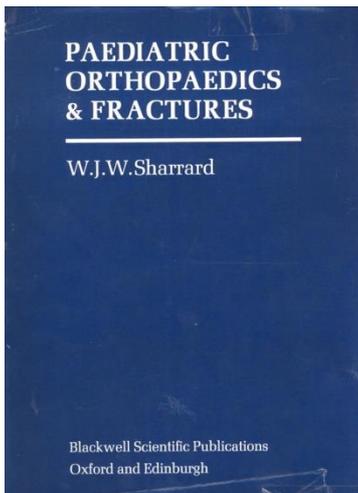


Fig. 1

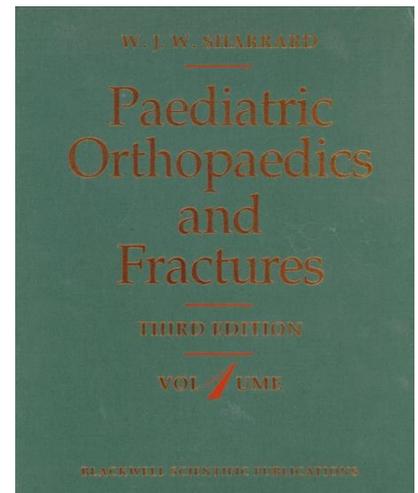
The Sheffield rods and instruments.

John Sharrard was a hard worker and extremely industrious and published more than 100 papers. As his wife Peta always said, after a day in the Hospital with consultations and OR he would start writing after dinner and continue until 2 or 3 in the morning. And he did that year-in year-out.



He published his first textbook on Paediatric Orthopaedics & Fractures in 1971, the third edition was in two volumes with 1500 pages, all written by himself (1993).

He was invited to many cities in the world as visiting Professor and guest lecturer. He founded the Orthopaedic Research Society in 1962, and he was President of the British Orthopaedic Association in 1978-9. Most of his scientific papers were dedicated to cerebral palsy, myelomeningocele, and telescopic rods in OI. Sharrard's successor was Mike Bell, who served EPOS as a Councillor from 2004 to 2007.



Hobbies

John Sharrard loved music, and he was able to perform with talent on the violin, the organ, and the piano. He was also fluent in French and translated many papers from French into English.

Top 5 references (English)

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2. Sharrard WJ. The segmental innervation of the lower limb muscles in man. Ann R Coll Surg Engl. 1964; 35: 106-22.
3. Carroll NC, Sharrard WJ. Long-term follow-up of posterior iliopsoas transplantation for paralytic dislocation of the hip. J Bone Joint Surg Am. 1972; 54: 551-60.
4. Sharrard WJ, Drennan JC. Osteotomy-excision of the spine for lumbar kyphosis in older children with myelomeningocele. J Bone Joint Surg Br. 1972; 54: 50-60.
5. Stockley I, Bell MJ, Sharrard WJ. The role of expanding intramedullary rods in osteogenesis imperfecta. J Bone Joint Surg Br. 1989; 71: 422-7.



John Sharrard, 2nd EPOS Seminar Stuttgart, 6th-7th October 1989, Coll. K Parsch