WILLIAM DERRICK COLTART
1907-1963

IN MEMORIAM

Derrick Coltart died suddenly and unexpectedly on June 5, at the age of fifty-five and at the height of his powers. The son of a doctor, he gained a scholarship from Epsom College to St Bartholomew’s Hospital. He qualified with the conjoint diploma in 1930, taking the M.B., B.S., of London University a month later and the F.R.C.S., England, in 1933. His house appointments included that of House Surgeon to the Orthopaedic Department under R. C. Elmslie and S. L. Higgs, at a time when the orthopaedic house surgeon acted also for the department of plastic surgery under Sir Harold Gillies. Like Elmslie, who followed Paget in bringing pathology into bone and joint surgery, Coltart served an apprenticeship as Junior Demonstrator of Pathology. Later he became chief assistant in the orthopaedic department and, as fracture officer, might be considered the professional descendant of John Izard, the first bonesetter to the Hospital, who was appointed in 1596. At various times Coltart held the posts of resident medical officer in King Edward VII Hospital for Officers; registrar at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital; honorary orthopaedic surgeon to the East Ham Memorial Hospital; and visiting surgeon to the Red Cross Clinics in Hertfordshire.

Although he had naval connections, the outbreak of World War II found him already a flight lieutenant and medical officer to the City of London Auxiliary Air Squadron, with whom he remained till Sir Reginald Watson-Jones had him established as an orthopaedic specialist in the Royal Air Force, where he reached the rank of wing commander, taking
charge of the surgical division of the R.A.F. Hospital at Church Village. In 1942 he was given special research duties directed to the early restoration of airmen to duty, which led to the publication of two classic papers, the first with Sir Reginald Watson-Jones on “Slow Union of Fractures” and the second on “Aviator’s Astragalus.” After the war he was elected to the staff of St Bartholomew’s as assistant orthopaedic surgeon. Other appointments included those of orthopaedic consultant adviser to British European Airways, orthopaedic surgeon to the British Red Cross Clinic for Rheumatism (later the Arthur Stanley Institute of the Middlesex Hospital), orthopaedic surgeon at Chase Farm Hospital and—posts that he still held when he died—orthopaedic surgeon to Chailey Heritage, St Andrew’s (Dollis Hill) and the Royal Masonic Hospital. He was a keen mason and held high office. He was Hunterian Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons in 1946 and Geigy Travelling Fellow of the Empire Rheumatism Council in 1958.

Coltart was devoted to his work and to his patients. His orthopaedic interests were wide, with perhaps special leanings towards limb injuries, rehabilitation and rheumatology. He rendered outstanding service in all three. He was an apt craftsman but kept his feet on the ground. A clear and accomplished teacher, he was full of ideas for undergraduate education and took an active interest in student affairs.

He loved organising, and he did it well. He had the gifts of decision and precision. His demands were clear and his instructions unambiguous. These qualities served him well in the operation theatre and outside it. He was in demand for committee work. He was a director of the Medical Defence Union, and did notable work for the Empire Rheumatism Council serving as chairman of the education committee. In 1959 he became treasurer of the Editorial Board of the Journal and secretary of The British Editorial Society of Bone and Joint Surgery. He proved a most worthy successor to Philip Wiles and brought to these duties and responsibilities his clear mind and abundant energy. The Journal has suffered a very heavy loss both personally and professionally.

Very handsome, a delightful companion, fond of his fellows, Coltart led a gregarious life. He had a host of friends in many spheres, enjoyed travel and was an excellent ambassador. He never seemed to tire, whether at work or play. He was a good runner in his earlier years and lately had become a keen fly fisherman. We have said farewell all too soon to a good companion and an able collaborator. Our sympathy goes out to his wife, Mary, and to his step-children, one a Bart’s student.

H. J. B.

PAUL BERNARD ROTH
1882–1962

Paul Bernard Roth, who died on December 29, 1962, was the last of three generations of picturesque orthopaedic practitioners.

The first (1819–91) was Matthias Roth, M.D., a Hungarian refugee who practised in Wimpole Street and wrote several works on physical education and treatment, introducing Ling’s system to England. A propagandist with many interests, he founded in 1856 the Ladies’ Sanitary Association, which by 1884 had sold over 1,400,000 “Sanitary tracts.”

His son (1852–1915), Bernard Matthias Roth, F.R.C.S., F.S.A., succeeded him at Wimpole Street, and like him, wrote a book advocating the exercise treatment of scoliosis. In spite of his cult of exercise, he was a friend and disciple of H. O. Thomas, whose splints he was one of the earliest London surgeons to adopt. The Institute of Orthopaedics has a letter from Thomas committing to his care a patient who had been pressed to see Wharton Hood, the great medical exponent of manipulation. Travelling by train, B. M. Roth practised every day...