IN MEMORIAM

MAUD FRANCES FORRESTER-BROWN
1885–1970

Miss Maud Forrester-Brown died at the age of eighty-four in the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary on January 12, 1970. Born in London, she spent her early life in India. Later she attended Bedford High School. Her medical education started at the London School of Medicine for Women. She graduated M.B., Ch.B. in 1912; M.D.(London) in 1914; and M.S. in 1920. She was a Gilchrist Student at the University of London. After graduation she attended a course of obstetrics in Glasgow and was assistant in a general practice at Dundee. She held various posts as house physician and house surgeon. Among these the most significant, in view of her future, was an appointment as house surgeon to the late Sir Harold Stiles at the Royal Hospital for Sick Children, Edinburgh, and as house surgeon to the Royal Infirmary, Liverpool.

In 1916 Sir Harold Stiles asked her to join the staff of the War Hospital at Bangour. This hospital was visited frequently by Sir Robert Jones, who was a personal friend of Sir Harold Stiles. There can be little doubt that, added to her years of experience at Bangour,
her meeting with Sir Robert Jones must have had a lot to do with the decision to make orthopaedics her life's work. After leaving Bangour she went to the Mecca of orthopaedics—Liverpool. She also went with Sir Robert Jones to Oswestry, and visited Oxford to see the work of the late G. R. Girdlestone, though she was never on the staffs of these hospitals.

When the opportunity arose to start an orthopaedic service in the south-west country, Sir Robert Jones supported her application for the post of orthopaedic surgeon to the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital. She was appointed to the staff of this hospital soon after its foundation in 1924.

She established a complete chain of children's orthopaedic clinics throughout Somerset, Wiltshire and Dorset. It is difficult for junior orthopaedic surgeons, inheritors of an orthopaedic mesh which covers the country, to realise the difficulties that Miss Forrester-Brown had to overcome. Tuberculosis, poliomyelitis and rickets were rife; static and postural defects were largely neglected; and congenital deformities were treated habitually not soon after birth, but "when the child was older and stronger". The pioneer orthopaedic surgeon was confronted with widespread local apathy, or even hostility and ignorance, from which the medical fraternity was not altogether immune. To this task she brought boundless energy, convincing argument, humanity and unflagging zeal. To staff the clinics she trained sisters in her own methods, which were doubtless influenced by Dame Agnes Hunt. The clinics were devised on the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt model of the Shropshire Orthopaedic Hospital, Oswestry, but bore distinguishing features born of her individual ideas. Miss Forrester-Brown was particularly keen on the correction of static and postural defects and their prevention. She visited the schools where, due to her inspiration and enthusiasm, daily postural exercises were done under the guidance of the teachers. Ultimately physical instructors were appointed. She persuaded the school authorities to provide suitably sized desks and chairs in place of the standard models and benches then in use, so that the children could sit correctly. She collaborated with a shoe-making firm to produce anatomically correct shoes for children. She was instrumental in installing a children's swimming pool in the physiotherapy department as a memorial to Sir Robert Jones. This large service which she formed, and which with its parent hospital became world famous, is now shared by three hospital regions and between many surgeons.

In 1923 Miss Forrester-Brown was awarded the William Gissane Research Scholarship by the Royal Society of Medicine, which she held for three years. With its aid she visited orthopaedic clinics in America. She was very impressed by the work of Dr J. E. Goldthwait, some of whose methods and appliances she adopted. She went also to Denmark and Sweden, and on many occasions to Italy, where she was attracted by the work of Professor Vittorio Putti, whose splint for congenital dislocation of the hip she was the first to use in this country. She translated many of Putti's articles into English. Indeed in some of her practice later it is not difficult to discern the influence of the schools of Bologna and Liverpool. Miss Forrester-Brown spent one vacation every year visiting orthopaedic clinics. There must be few in Europe who did not at one time or another entertain this avid enquirer, and few who did not gain from her visit.

According to Confucius, "To keep old knowledge warm, and to seek out new, makes the teacher". Miss Forrester-Brown was a teacher and a most ardent teacher. Whereas her approach to orthopaedic problems was conservative, it could be said that she disregarded Pope's dictum, "Be not the first by whom the new is tried; nor yet the last to lay the old aside", because she was the first in several fields, operative and non-operative. She devised many splints, appliances and methods for treating congenital deformities and poliomyelitis.

Her contributions to medical literature indicate the breadth of her interests and the fertility of her mind. They include articles on bone grafting, nerve suture, the importance of posture,
the treatment of ununited fractures and many other subjects. She was always concerned with
the care and comfort of the patient.

Miss Forrester-Brown was a keen supporter of many medical societies and associations,
and a frequent contributor to their deliberations and publications. She became a member of
the British Orthopaedic Association in 1921, was Secretary in 1937, served on the Executive
Committee in 1948–49 and was elected Emeritus Fellow in 1961. She was a member of the
British Medical Association for over fifty years. She was honorary secretary to the Section
of Orthopaedics at the annual meeting in 1931 and Vice-President in 1937. She was a member
of the Association’s Physical Education Committee formed in 1935 to consider and report on
the necessity for cultivation of the physical development of the civil population. Miss
Forrester-Brown was a member, and later emeritus member, of S.I.C.O.T. She was a member
of the Medical Women’s International Association, and in 1963 attended the ninth Congress
in the Philippines where, according to local report, a special bed-to-bed tour of the National
Orthopaedic Hospital was arranged for her. She said “I do not just want to see the buildings;
I want to see the work”.

Miss Forrester-Brown retired officially in 1951 and was appointed Emeritus Consultant
to the Bath and Wessex Orthopaedic Hospital. But retirement, as any of her friends might
have predicted, did not mean that she became a lotus eater. On returning to Edinburgh she
assisted the late Sir James Learmonth in his investigation on the repair of peripheral nerves,
with or without interference with the corresponding sympathetics. She was a frequent visitor
to the Princess Margaret Rose Orthopaedic Hospital, where she participated in group
discussions and ward rounds. She acted as locum tenens at Huddersfield in 1954 and at
Kirkcaldy and other orthopaedic services in this country. Later she held the post of temporary
orthopaedic surgeon at the Holy Cross Hospital, East Pondoland in the Transkei, South
Africa, where she found the orthopaedic problems to be similar to those she had dealt with
in the ’twenties.

Miss Forrester-Brown was indeed a remarkable person. If one met her for the first time
at an orthopaedic conference and began to speak of any orthopaedic subject she would be
animated, dealing with the subject from all angles and with unending enthusiasm. Orthopaedics
seemed to be the all-embracing passion of her life—but in fact she was a woman of many
parts and interests to which she brought an equal verve. She could speak five languages
fluently; she learned Spanish in her sixties. She had keen interest in all classical forms of
drama, sculpture and painting; a wide knowledge of the old masters, especially those of the
Italian schools; and a catholic knowledge of literature. Indeed her retentive memory and
critical abilities made discussion of literature with her a formidable task.

Early in life she must have taken the advice of Juvenal: “Orandum est ut sit mens sana
in corpore sano”. And the prayer was answered. Bodily fitness was not only a sermon to be
preached to others; it was a goal to which she strove all her life—by ski-ing, skating, riding,
golf and swimming. She took a vacation each February for winter sports, usually in Norway.
Many associates must remember the twinkle in her eyes when she slipped away from a
congress session with the murmur: “I have an appointment with a horse”.

At the age of seventy-five Miss Forrester-Brown sustained a fracture of the neck of the
left femur which was nailed successfully. During convalescence she said, “I shall never get
better until I get on a horse”. She got on a horse and she got better. Two years later she had
a comminuted fracture of the left elbow joint. After reduction and a short period of plaster
fixation she insisted on her own rehabilitation. Within two months she was swimming and
driving her car. Three years before her death she was riding once a week and swimming twice
a week in the local baths.

How can anyone appreciate fully such a life? We can but respect and admire one who
was cultured, compassionate and kind, a pioneer, seeker and inspirer, who contributed much
to the world in which she dwelt, and who lived her life with zest.

R. I. S.

THE JOURNAL OF BONE AND JOINT SURGERY
IN MEMORIAM

JOHN BENTHAM MORRIS

1933-1970

John B. Morris died in Auckland on January 9, 1970. His death at such an early age, when he had achieved considerable prominence by his ability and contributions to orthopaedics, leaves a large gap. The son of the late Selwyn B. Morris, a leading orthopaedic surgeon in Auckland who himself died young, John Morris was born in London and educated in Auckland at King’s College, graduating in medicine from the University of Otago in 1956. He then worked as a house surgeon in Auckland and as a registrar in Christchurch, gaining his Primary Fellowship examination before going overseas and completing the F.R.C.S.(England) in 1960.

He worked for a time at the Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital and then in Manchester with Mr John Charnley, who added to his natural enthusiasm a profound interest in hip surgery.

He was appointed an Exchange Travelling Fellow of the British Orthopaedic Association in 1962 and toured North America. Returning to New Zealand in 1963, he was appointed visiting orthopaedic surgeon at Middlemore Hospital and later at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital. He was also awarded a Bank of New Zealand research grant, and despite a busy hospital and private practice found time to engage in basic research on the problems associated with fixation of hip prostheses.

After a further overseas trip in 1966 he initiated a research programme for prosthetic replacement of the hip joint at Middlemore Hospital and lived to see this develop into a most successful project. He presented many papers at orthopaedic meetings, particularly on surgery of the hip. He also developed an interest in the orthopaedic problems of spina bifida and conducted a clinic for these patients. He was a member of the New Zealand Orthopaedic Association, of the Western Pacific Orthopaedic Association and its Editorial Board, and of the Auckland Medico-legal Society.

In his university days he was an outstanding sportsman, excelling at cricket and rugby football and gaining a double New Zealand University blue in these sports. He also represented the Province of Auckland at cricket.

Although first afflicted several years ago by the disease that proved fatal, he continued his work with enthusiasm and courage which was an example to all those with whom he came in contact. His scientific approach to clinical orthopaedics, his challenging and good humoured criticism at meetings, and his vision for future development have been an outstanding contribution to orthopaedics in New Zealand. The stimulus received by younger men will ensure that his work is continued. He is survived by his wife and three sons. O. R. N.