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## Mr John D Scott FRCS FRCOphth (1936 – 2013)



John Scott believed that everything was possible in surgery and dedicated his life to the repair and understanding of difficult retinal detachments, a condition that had previously been deemed untreatable and irreversibly blinding.

His interest in retinal detachment surgery started at the Western Eye Hospital in London, while working with Gregory Keith. John subsequently completed his ophthalmic training at Moorfields Eye Hospital London. His expertise, interest and forward thinking about the causes and possible therapies for the various forms of retinal detachment led him to become a protégé of Mr Lorimer Fison who recommended him to be appointed as a consultant at Addenbrooke's in 1967 at the age of 31.

A condition of his appointment was that he spent a period of time in the USA observing those who were advancing the treatment of retinal problems. For three months he travelled around various centres of excellence

in the United States including Bascom Palmer in Miami, Harvey Lincoff in New York, Johns Hopkins and Ed Okun in St Louis, Missouri.

One of the most innovative surgeons, Paul Cibis, had recently died young, during his forties. John never met Cibis, but was able to examine the patients who had been operated

Soon after his return to Cambridge the Royal Commonwealth Society for the Blind (now Sight Savers International) offered John the opportunity to work in Enugu in SE Nigeria caring for patients after the Biafran War.

Treating his patients surgically first required him to rebuild the operating theatre at the hospital to which he was attached and travelling to many villages with his driver to examine patients. Whilst there he developed viral encephalitis which he treated with locally brewed "Star" beer. This severe illness was not enough to stop him and as soon as he felt well enough he insisted on being carried to his clinics on a chair. He was made an honorary Chief by the community he served – of his many honours, one of which he was particularly proud.

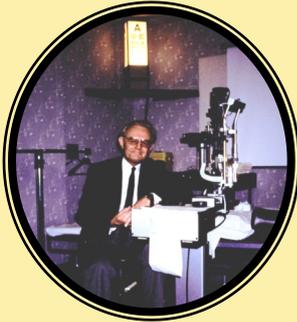
***"...the harmony he made in the operating room during the day and in the concert hall in the evening."***

upon by him using the first hand held vitreous cutter and silicone oil to repair some very difficult detachments.

John was so impressed with his work that he brought the entire stock of Cibis' unused silicone oil back with him to Cambridge so that he could develop its use.



**‘...he always referred to his team as “my other family”...’**



Late on a Sunday evening after seeing all the patients pre-operatively for Monday

Back in Cambridge, John established a national and international reputation for managing all aspects of retinal disease and within two years had described and published the first report on “open skies” vitrectomy for the late complications of diabetic retinopathy. He became particularly expert in the management of retinal detachment repair for patients on whom others had tried and abandoned hope or were deemed inoperable from the outset.

Giant retinal tears, particularly those occurring in children and young adults with Stickler’s syndrome, were especially difficult to manage because the retina, being torn through most (if not all) of its 360° circumference, tends to collapse under the influence of gravity to lie in a heap at the back of the eye.

John solved this by persuading Mackay’s Ironmongers in East Road, Cambridge to make him a special operating table which could allow him to operate on the patient upside down. Then, fully scrubbed, gowned and gloved he lay on a mechanic’s trolley beneath the suspended patient, operating from underneath using gravity to unfold the collapsed retina allowing

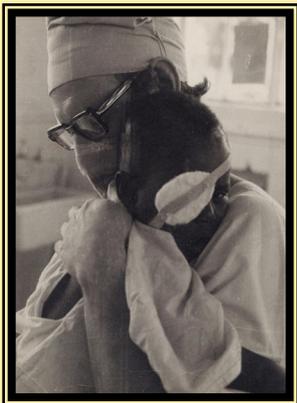
it to be reattached.

John also utilised his engineering and clock-making skills to design and modify many vitreoretinal instruments, perhaps the finest being the automated diabetic delamination scissors which he developed in collaboration with Rudolph Kloti from Zurich and Heinz Oertli.

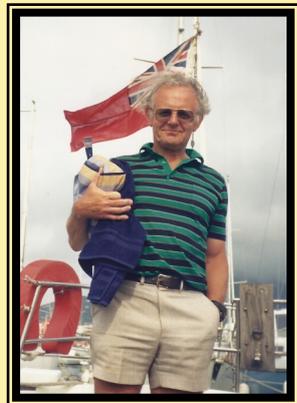
He travelled and lectured widely in Australia, India, the United States, Pakistan, Kuwait, Egypt and many other countries. He was awarded the Duke Elder medal from the Royal College of Ophthalmologists and was made Fellow Honoris Causi a few months before he became ill. He also was awarded the

Charamis Medal from the European Society of Ophthalmologists and the Herman Wacker Prize from the Club Jules Gonin, a prize which is awarded to the individual who has contributed the most significant advances in the treatment and understanding of vitreoretinal disorders. John was the first UK surgeon to receive this award, the highest accolade in vitreoretinal surgery.

Not only was he a superb retinal surgeon and teacher, whose sessions brought many from the surrounding area and from London, he was also a highly competent violinist, a clockmaker and a pilot, but to the end he retained his abiding interest in ophthalmology.



Royal Commonwealth Society working in Enugu, SE Nigeria



Sailing with Peter Watson in the Mediterranean

*“We have lost an icon in the field of vitreoretinal surgery.*

*John Scott was a creative and profoundly insightful surgeon who through independent thinking and careful observations, developed the foundations for the use of silicone oil in vitreoretinal surgery. He taught the ophthalmic community about the dreadful consequences of Stickler’s syndrome.*

*His skills as a surgeon and compassion for his patients made him a truly remarkable physician.”*

*Prof Stanley Chang*  
*Professor and Chairman of Ophthalmology*  
*Columbia University, New York*



May 2012: Charity bike ride by Annie McNinch, Stickler specialist nurse, from Lands End to John O’Groats to raise money for Help for Heroes



March 2009: Opening of the Cambridge Eye Unit, Addenbrooke’s

## FOCUS ON RESEARCH

Following on from John Scott's work, the Vitreoretinal Service at Addenbrooke's Hospital has been offering patients with type 1 Stickler's syndrome a standardized retinal prophylactic treatment to prevent retinal detachment. However, there has been little consensus in the vitreoretinal community regarding the effectiveness of prophylactic cryotherapy in Stickler's syndrome (the most frequent cause of inherited and childhood retinal detachment).

The Vitreoretinal Research Group, led by Mr Martin Snead, reviewed the clinical records of over one thousand patients with Stickler's syndrome, to evaluate the long-term safety and efficacy of the Cambridge Prophylactic Cryotherapy Protocol.



**Complete retinal detachment before surgical repair in a young boy with Stickler's syndrome**

The results showed that undergoing bilateral prophylactic cryotherapy reduced the risk of retinal detachment by at least five fold, and in those patients who underwent unilateral prophylactic cryotherapy (after suffering a retinal detachment in their fellow eye), the risk of a second retinal detachment was reduced by greater than eight-

fold. No long-term side effects occurred as a result of prophylactic treatment.

In the largest global cohort of Stickler syndrome patients published to date, all analyses indicate that the Cambridge Prophylactic Cryotherapy Protocol is safe and markedly reduces the risk of retinal detachment in type 1 Stickler's syndrome.

Mr Greg Fincham has received several prizes for this work, including the East of England John Cairns memorial prize, the Royal Society of Medicine Dermot Pierson prize and the Oxford Ophthalmological Congress Ian Fraser cup.

Professor Keith Martin's team at the John van Geest Centre for Brain Repair have, for the first time, shown

that mature retinal cells can be printed successfully using a piezoelectric inkjet printer and that they remain viable.



**Printing viable retinal cells – a world first**

This opens up exciting new possibilities in the future for retinal transplantation and regeneration with the aim of restoring sight. Further details can be found at the following: [cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk](http://cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk), [www.independent.co.uk/news/science/british-scientists-print-eye-cells-in-world-first-9011287.html](http://www.independent.co.uk/news/science/british-scientists-print-eye-cells-in-world-first-9011287.html), [www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-25405542](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-25405542) and [www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2525715](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2525715).

## NEWS

Mr Peter Watson, a retired Addenbrooke's consultant ophthalmologist, has been awarded the 2014 Jules-Francois Gold Research medal which is awarded once every four years by the International Council of Ophthalmology.



**Mr Peter Watson**

He delivered the oration in Brussels in November 2013, entitled "The impact of the Newer Methods of Investigation and Treatment on the Understanding of the Pathology of Scleral Inflammation".

Two new Addenbrooke's consultants have been appointed: Miss Humma Shahid (Glaucoma) and Miss Brinda Muthusamy (Paediatrics and Neuro-ophthalmology).



**Miss Humma Shahid**

Miss Humma Shahid was appointed as a new consultant in June 2013. Having completed her ophthalmology training in the dreaming spires of Oxford, she has completed subspecialty training in glaucoma with Professor Keith Martin and Mr Nicholas Sarkies and has now joined them as a consultant to run the glaucoma service at Addenbrooke's hospital. She has a background of research in the genetics of complex eye disease and hopes to continue with this work in the future.

Miss Brinda Muthusamy has been appointed as a consultant in Paediatric Ophthalmology and Neuro-ophthalmology. She ob-

tained her MRCP whilst completing the Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals medical rotation before embarking on ophthalmology as a career. She started her training in Cheltenham and Cambridge before joining the Severn rotation and went on to complete a fellowship in paediatric ophthalmology and then neuro-ophthalmology at The Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Maryland with David Guyton, Michael Repka and Neil Miller.



**Miss Brinda Muthusamy**

Dr Amanda Barber has been awarded the Cambridge Eye Trust Dickerson Fellowship and has joined Professor Keith Martin's team at the John van Geest Centre for



**Dr Amanda Barber**

Brain Repair at the University of Cambridge. She has worked in the field of vision and regenerative medicine for six years and completed her PhD under Dr Rachael Pearson & Professor Robin Ali at the Institute of Ophthalmology, University College, London. Her PhD focused on developing methods to transplant immature photoreceptor cells to treat retinal degenerative conditions.

Now having moved into the field of optic nerve regeneration, she hopes to use her previous experience to stimulate retinal ganglion cells to regenerate their axons after injury, aiming to restore connectivity to the brain and improve sight.

**ABOUT US**

The Cambridge Eye Trust is an independent registered charity devoted to the prevention of blindness and the restoration of sight by promoting excellence in patient care, research and the continuing education of those involved in the treatment of eye disease.

The trust supports research in the university and hospital Departments of Ophthalmology. Cambridge is in a unique position to develop innovative therapies with the university's strong basic science tradition, talented graduate and undergraduate community and close collaborations with the pharmaceutical industry.

Your donations can help us begin to harness this potential and strengthen the university and hospital Departments of Ophthalmology.

We're all over the web too!  
[cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk](http://cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk)  
[cambridge-symposium.org](http://cambridge-symposium.org)  
[vitreoretinalservice.org](http://vitreoretinalservice.org)



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**CAMBRIDGE EYE TRUST: EVENTS**

In June, the consultants entertained the staff and old members to a hog roast in the garden of the Watson family.

The hog and the other delicious food that was provided by those in the department made this a memorable and most enjoyable day.

The Cambridge Ophthalmological Symposium was held in September in St John's College. It was chaired by



**Cambridge Ophthalmological Symposium 2014**  
**Ocular Motility**

Brien Holden from the University of Sydney on the topic of refractive error. The symposium brought together international experts to discuss the genetics, lifestyle and structural components of refractive



Mr Michael Clarke



Mr Anthony Vivian

surgery and associated problems. The 44th Cambridge Symposium will be held at the Old Divinity School from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The topic chosen is 'Ocular Motility' and will be jointly chaired by Mr Michael Clarke and Mr Anthony Vivian.

**THANK YOU**

Over the past year, we have had a wonderful response from everyone, including patients, an alumnus and from the organised events. A large amount of the funding has come from the small amounts given by those who have seen our notice in the last Newsletter.

I hope you will continue to help this great work of strengthening the university and hospital Departments of Ophthalmology by ensuring that they have the best research staff and equipment that is available so that they can continue to attract the highest level of support for the research projects which benefit us locally, nationally and internationally.

**I want to help support research to cure blindness!**

Please provide your name and address below:

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Please tick:

- I can help by a donation and enclose a cheque made out to the Cambridge Eye Trust
- I can help by a secure donation online using PayPal at [cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk](http://cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk)
- I am a UK Taxpayer and authorise you to claim gift aid on my behalf (this increases the value of your donation by 25% at no cost to you).

Please return this section to the Cambridge Eye Trust at our address in Clerk Maxwell Road.

All current research projects are described on the Cambridge Eye Trust website:  
[www.cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk](http://www.cambridgeeyetrust.org.uk)

If you wish to sponsor a particular project or have any other ideas as to how you can help, please contact Mr Peter Watson or Professor Keith Martin via the email addresses on the left.

The Annual Report and the accounts are available on the Charity Commission website.