

James Cosbie Ross—A Profile



Jim Cosbie Ross (Gentleman Jim to some of his colleagues) came from Northern Irish stock. His father was a General Practitioner in Liverpool, where Jim was born in 1904. Educated at Liverpool College and Liverpool University, he qualified in medicine with honours in 1925, taking the Fellowship in 1930 and the Mastership in 1931. Following the usual house appointments he became Surgical Registrar at the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, where Sir Robert Kelly was his idol, before being appointed consultant at the Royal Southern Hospital and Sefton General Hospital. His work gradually turned towards urology and he established at Sefton, first, an Artificial Kidney Unit (the second in the country) and later a Regional Urological Centre which included a strong nephrological team. His academic leanings were recognised by his appointment as Director of Urological studies at the University. Further pioneering efforts together with some of his junior colleagues resulted in a revolution in the management of genito-urinary tuberculosis and what was then known as the neurogenic bladder. As a result, patients have benefitted not only on Merseyside but all over the world.

In 1964 he was co-founder of the Merseyside Association for Kidney Research, which he served as Chairman for many years, prior to his election as Vice-President in April of this year, when he moved to London to be near some members of his family to which he has always been devoted. He was also a founder-member of the British Association of Urological Surgeons and of the

International Medical Society of Paraplegia, both of which he has served tirelessly and with distinction.

His editorial efforts have not been limited to the journals of these associations but have recently blossomed in an elegant and charming little book based on the collected papers of his grandfather James Cosbie of Ballymeana. His medical publications, which exceed a hundred, are thoughtfully written and highly respected. Inevitably, honours came his way and he was elected President of the Liverpool Medical Institution and of the Moynihan Club as well as Chairman of the Faculty of Medicine. Jim has always been a prodigious worker. Unlike most of us, who are capable of only periodic spurts of activity, he can sustain a high level of effort indefinitely. He seems to be able to find a new challenge in the same job almost every day and at the same time to ensure by example that his colleagues do not flag. It is not an exaggeration to say that many of them have been stimulated, nay goaded, by him towards achievements which might otherwise never have been realised. Like so many other Senior Consultants in the early days of the National Health Service, he rarely took his full entitlement of annual leave. When one of his staff requested a break, his invariable reply was, 'Holiday again, old chap?' Yet Jim has never been a 'dull boy'. His outdoor pursuits have included tennis (he was a founder member of his club) and sailing. He once came close to winning the Isle of Man race. Later he took to lengthy walks along Hadrian's Wall and the Pennine Way. He has also become a connoisseur of English Water Colours of which he owns an interesting collection. His love of music has led him to be a devotee of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and he has regularly made a Shakespearian Pilgrimage to Stratford-upon-Avon. He was a Founder Member of the Innominate Club, at the meetings of which only non-medical papers are read. He has long been a stalwart supporter of the building and running of the Anglican Cathedral in Liverpool, and one of his greatest ambitions was realised with its completion a few years ago. As the poet Ariosto put it: 'Nature made him and then broke the mould.' We all salute Gentleman Jim and wish him well in his second retirement.

Norman Gibbon
John Goldsmith