

## James Spence Medallists, 1987

Professor John Lewis Emery  
Dr Frederick J W Miller

The James Spence Medal was presented to Professor John Lewis Emery and Dr Frederick J W Miller on 9 April 1987. Professor John Forfar, President of the British Paediatric Association, gave the following citations:

### **Professor John Lewis Emery**

Early in life John Emery found himself confronted with a career decision between the church, art, or medicine and fortunately chose the latter. He graduated in medicine in the University of Bristol in 1939 and almost at once showed that his primary interest was with children and the problems of childhood disease. Working with the Emergency Medical Service in the early part of the 1939–45 War he was involved in the care of evacuated children. Then began the career in pathology which he has pursued with such distinction since, first at Bristol for five years and then at Sheffield as Consultant Pathologist to the Children's Hospital. It is there that his main life's work has been carried out.

He was the first pathologist to be appointed to the Children's Hospital in Sheffield and over twenty three years there built up a comprehensive paediatric pathology department embracing morbid anatomy, microbiology, haematology and chemical pathology. At a time when in many parts of the country inadequate, usually adult-orientated, pathology services were limiting pathological and therefore clinical understanding of childhood disease and preventing the advances which might otherwise have been made John Emery showed what a paediatric service planned for and devoted to the problems of children could achieve. He played an important part in the many successes which were achieved in the Children's Hospital in Sheffield in advancing understanding of the nature of childhood disease and in developing better methods of management. The energy, the insight into pathology, and the appreciation of the special needs of paediatrics which he has shown have made him one of the founding fathers of paediatric pathology in this country and have established for him an inter-



national reputation in the field. Recognising his distinction, the University of Sheffield in 1972 appointed him Professor Associate in Paediatric Pathology, the first such appointment in a British provincial university.

His own research interests have led him through the fields of haematology; developmental anatomy; congenital deformities, particularly hydrocephalus, and latterly unexplained infant deaths. To all of these subjects he has contributed significantly and his original contributions to the literature exceed 200. The number of his co-authors testifies to the extent of his help to others. He has lectured extensively both in this country and abroad and has been a most assiduous contributor to scientific meetings. He was the Frederick Still lecturer of the BPA in 1977.

In the latter part of his career and in his six years of so called 'retirement' he has been associated particularly with seeking an understanding of the problem of cot death. Having explored the pathology of this extensively he has recognised that the traditional methods of pathology cannot alone solve this perplexing problem. With characteristic flexibility of mind he has broken the bonds of traditional practice which bind most pathologists and has emerged as an epidemiologist and social paediatrician of distinction. His contributions to this field continue.

His drive and initiative have also revealed themselves in other ways. Within his profession he has been responsible for initiating the International Paediatric Pathology Association, the Paediatric Pathology Society and the Developmental Pathology Society. He was a Founder Member of the Society for Research into Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida and a member of the inaugurating committee of the Foundation for the Study of Infant Deaths.

His services and his help have been sought world-

wide. On behalf of the World Health Organization he advised on paediatric pathology services in India. The United States asked him to undertake a study of the cot death bereavement services in a number of its states. Both Australia and New Zealand have invited him to survey their infant death material.

Outside his profession the early interest in the Arts which almost deprived medicine of his services has been maintained. He has been associated, at times as President, with a number of literary and fine arts societies in Sheffield and has even been President of a museum society which was not concerned with pathology, the Sheffield Museum Society.

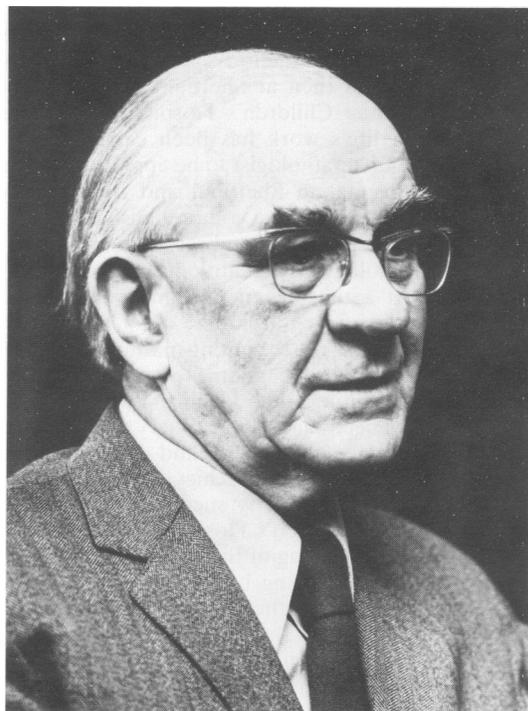
Ungenerously John Emery now describes himself as a 'pathological community paediatrician'. Others would prefer to describe him more accurately as paediatric pathologist, paediatrician, childhood community sociologist, student of the arts, and above all man of deep human sympathy and sincerity to whom this Association is glad to award its highest distinction.

### **Dr Frederick J W Miller**

Dr Fred Miller qualified from the Medical School of the University of Durham, now the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1934, at a time when paediatrics in Britain was a very inadequately developed specialty. He was one of the pioneers of paediatrics, a member of that distinguished Newcastle trio, Sir James Spence, Donald Court, and Frederick Miller who did so much to establish the pattern and promote the understanding of paediatrics in this country.

Even as an undergraduate in the early 1930s he was influenced by the poverty and childhood disease which he saw around him in the North East of England and he maintained a lifelong interest in social paediatrics. This was recognised in 1955 by his appointment—one which remains unique to this day—as Reader in Social Paediatrics in the University of Durham.

After postgraduate appointments in paediatrics in Newcastle and at Great Ormond Street he showed his early interest in chest disease by a period spent at the Brompton Hospital. He then returned to Newcastle and in 1939 embarked with Sir James Spence on a study of the circumstances surrounding every infant death occurring at home or in hospital in the



city of Newcastle. Despite the onset of war this study was completed and published in 1941. It revealed much about the hazards of birth, the risks of prematurity, and the various infections from which children suffered in the first year of life.

Three years of war service as a medical specialist in the army intervened before Dr Miller returned to Newcastle. Now began the classic study of the '1000 families' by himself, Sir James Spence, and Donald Court. This was no short term research but a unique long term study, published in three books, of the pattern and incidence of childhood disease, particularly childhood infections, in a total community. It was a study which brought together in a unified way many elements of the child health service, hospital paediatricians, child health doctors working in the community, nurses and health visitors. It was a lesson on how the child health services could be integrated, a lesson we have still not learned adequately today.

Dr Miller, as paediatrician to the Maternity Unit of Newcastle General Hospital, was one of the early neonatologists. At a time when hospital services for the prematurely born infant were very poor he developed a home nursing service for premature infants.

Another of Dr Miller's main contributions to paediatrics was in the field of tuberculosis. When he began his paediatric career tuberculosis was a major scourge of childhood; by 1963 tuberculosis in children in Newcastle had become a rarity. His

research and his publications played a not insignificant part in achieving that satisfactory result.

In 1966, at the request of the World Health Organisation, Dr Miller spent nine months in India studying and reporting on the teaching of Child Health in that country. In the subsequent furtherance of the projects developed from that study he visited India every year until 1984.

Fred Miller is essentially a caring, concerned paediatrician. The child health problems which he saw all around him concerned him and stimulated him to new endeavours. He threw himself wholeheartedly into attempting to solve them. He recognised the need to measure the nature and size of the problem of childhood disease and addressed himself to it; he saw tuberculosis as a major scourge of children and sought to eradicate it; in Newcastle an infant mortality rate of 91 per thousand in 1937 led him to concern himself with neonatal care and with the development of practical steps to reduce this; when a developing country sought his professional help he responded more than generously.

The enthusiasm with which the announcement of the award of the British Paediatric Association's highest distinction, the James Spence Medal, to Dr Frederick Miller has been received by colleagues young and old in the North East of England and far beyond is a measure of the respect and affection in which he is held; he is recognised as a paediatrician whose career has represented a major contribution to the welfare of children.

### James Spence Medallists

1960 Professor A A Moncrieff  
 1961 Professor R A McCance  
 1963 Sir F Macfarlane Burnet  
 1964 Professor L S Penrose  
 1965 Dr Cicely D Williams  
 1967 Professor R R A Coombs  
 1968 Dr Mary D Sheridan  
       Dr D W Winnicott  
 1969 Dr G S Dawes  
 1970 Professor D V Hubble  
 1971 Dr W W Payne  
 1972 Dr R C Mac Keith

1973 Professor C A Clarke  
 1974 Dr J Bowlby  
 1976 Dr D M T Gairdner  
 1977 Professor R S Illingworth  
 1978 Dr S D M Court  
 1979 Professor K W Cross  
 1980 Professor J M Tanner  
 1981 Dr Elsie M Widdowson  
 1982 Dr D MacCarthy  
 1983 Professor J O Forfar  
 1984 Dr J W B Douglas  
 1985 Dr N S Gordon  
 1986 Professor J P M Tizard