

Admission Ceremony 2017

Citation for Roger Hitchings, introduced by Mohit Gupta, Honorary Secretary

Roger is a world-renowned Glaucoma specialist who has dedicated his life's work to the field of Ophthalmology which include optic nerve imaging, visual field assessment, glaucoma surgery and normal tension glaucoma. He was born in St Albans and did his schooling at Steyning Sussex.

He qualified in 1966 and apart from two brief spells at the Wills Eye Institute in the USA with George Spaeth and Kings College Hospital he has worked at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Trust since 1969 and as a consultant since 1981. During this time, he excelled in his contributions to clinical practice, teaching and research in the Trust, nationally and internationally.

He married his lovely wife Vimmi who he met in medical school at a time when marriages between white British and Indians were very unusual but both showed considerable courage to face the prejudice. Vimmi became a partner in a GP practice and they have 2 lovely daughters and 5 grandchildren. Roger and Vimmi share their love for India and their interest in its culture, history, and importantly, Food.

Roger was a council member of the College from 1996 to 2000. Roger was President of the European Glaucoma Society and developed the EGS Guidelines for Glaucoma and conducted a survey of the prevalence of glaucoma in Malta for the World Health Organisation. He was a founding member and first President, and on the Board of, the Association of International Glaucoma Societies (AIGS).

Roger's many roles at Moorfields Eye Hospital included being the Clinical Lead for and developing an internationally recognised Glaucoma Service; Director of R&D; Chair of several committees including the Medical Advisory Committee, Trust Executive Board, as well as mentoring several generations of glaucoma fellows.

In research, he has been an inspirational leader in his field with many programmes of high quality investigations that have made an important contribution to the evidence base through publication in top-rated, peer-reviewed journals. Many of these have made a real impact on the health of people by improved diagnostic tools and surgical interventions/medical management strategies that halt progression of visual loss.

His success in his academic endeavour has been facilitated by his willingness to collaborate with others nationally and internationally, based on the principle that improvements to patient care are achieved as quickly as possible.

His huge range of **seminal glaucoma research include** The Moorfields Primary Treatment trial; The PROGRESSOR programme; Moorfields motion detection test with Professor Fred Fitzke; Moorfields method of analysis of optic disc morphometry; chronic conjunctival scarring following the use of topical glaucoma medications; and the introduction of glaucoma tube surgery into UK practice with a wide range of surgical publications. He also participated in national and international studies ratifying new grading systems, such as the Moorfields Bleb Grading Centre System - probably the single most highly ratified grading system in the world which has proven to be useful in early prediction of glaucoma surgery failure.

There was nothing more terrifying to a speaker when, at the end of their lecture, asking for questions, to see Rogers hand go up. Roger would then very politely say how very interesting he found the lecture and thank the speaker for highlighting an issue and then add ' but this is just one small

question'. This would always instil terror because the question would destroy the speaker's argument in a totally non-confrontational way and they would leave the stage utterly deflated.

He has **also established the Clinical Trials Unit and Reading Centre** at Moorfields Eye Hospital (which was ratified by Wisconsin and the National Eye Institute), with the latter being one of the UK's key centres for evaluation outcomes in ophthalmic clinical trials.

In **teaching**, he has been a major contributor to the training of ophthalmologists and postgraduate students in the subspecialty, many of whom now hold very senior positions in eye hospitals/departments all over the world. This part of his work included the establishment of a charity. The European Glaucoma Research and Education Trust, to promote training in glaucoma for ophthalmologists in (Eastern) Europe.

He is the **author of many text books** in his specialist field that were used by others for training purposes including the prize-winning Atlas of Clinical Ophthalmology and he has been an examiner for many doctoral theses. He was also on the editorial board of many prestigious journals and an external reviewer for grant applications to many research councils and charitable organisations.

Roger has given the Bowman Lecture for the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, the most prestigious named lecture the College could bestow. Other **named lectures** include the Ida Mann, Duke Elder, Goldmann, American Glaucoma Society and Shaffer lectures. Roger is also a Freeman of the City of London and a Liveryman of the Apothecaries Society.

Overall, he is a wonderful educator who led his young trainees into new dimensions and new careers. Roger developed the glaucoma department at Moorfields Eye Hospital into the largest in the UK, and one of the largest in the world. He has gone on to become a father figure of current glaucoma in the UK.

Roger is a family man. Roger recently dedicated much of his time to conduct research on the history of London to write a special book for his grand-children. Roger enjoys telling short, funny stories which make us all laugh but are actually deep observations of life and of human behaviour. He likes history, culture, croquet, gardening and jazz, and he and Vimi like to attend the annual Proms at St Jude's near where they live, which is a festival of music and culture with a focus on classical music and jazz. Last year, Anita and Samantha, Roger and Vimi's daughters held a very special occasion to celebrate their wonderful parents' Golden Anniversary.

He is also a proud Britisher. At a closed meeting at the IGS and the French commentator was asking what a man who spoke two languages was called, bilingual, what a man who spoke three languages was called, trilingual, and what a man who spoke one language was called, and he said British.

Roger, being a very proud Britisher took umbrage and to this he replied to the French man; Sir, you are wrong. Every Englishman speaks two languages. The first the one with which I am addressing you, and the second one where we speak very S-L-O-O-O-O-W and L-O-O-O-O-O-O-U-D. I think this illustrates Roger's pride in being British and most of all his dry humour.

Just after he retired Roger suffered an epileptic fit. Naturally there was concern about him at Moorfields and eventually a diagnosis of a benign meningioma was made. When Wendy Franks a consultant colleague reassured John Lee that Roger was getting better and was expected to make a complete recovery he remarked 'how typical of Roger to grow even more brain'.

The latest honour that Roger has been bestowed with that he has been made 'Laureate' by the EGS in Helsinki this year. This is the first time this honour has been bestowed by the EGS.