

PROFESSOR GEORGE PERKINS

Professor George Perkins, MC, FRCS, formerly Professor of Surgery at St Thomas's Hospital Medical School, died on October 22. He was 87.

George Perkins was born at Staines, Middlesex, on September 22, 1892, the son of a prominent local tradesman. He was educated at Hurstpierpoint College, and he went up to Hertford College, Oxford, in 1910. From there he passed on to the St Thomas's Hospital, and took his Oxford degree in 1916. He immediately enlisted in the RAMC and was posted to East Africa, where he remained until 1919. It was for services in the East African campaign that he was awarded the Military Cross.

In 1919 he was appointed to the Military Orthopaedic Hospital, Hammersmith, where he worked with Sir Max Page. In 1923 he was appointed Chief Assistant to the Orthopaedic Department of St Thomas's Hospital, and was elevated to Assistant Surgeon to the Department in 1926. From this time until 1939 George Perkins was working closely with the late W. Rowley Bristow, who was head of the department. These were the great years of the Orthopaedic Department of St Thomas's Hospital. Sir Robert Jones was the titular head, but the collaboration of Bristow and Perkins produced a new school of orthopaedics known throughout the world, and its tradition remains until this day.

In August 1939 Perkins was recalled to the Army, and he served in CCS in France until January 1940. He was ill, and he was invalided from the Service. After more than a year's convalescence he took up his work again at Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, as Orthopaedic Surgeon until the end of the war.

In 1948 he was appointed Professor of Surgery in the London University at St Thomas's Hospital, which post he held until 1954. This appointment marked a milestone in the liberal development of surgery in this country. It was the first time that an avowed orthopaedic specialist had been appointed to a Chair of General Surgery in this country.

Because of his wide interest and knowledge, and his humane characteristics, he filled this post with distinction. He was a former President of the British Orthopaedic Association. He reverted, on his resignation as Professor of Surgery, to Head of the Orthopaedic Department of St Thomas's until he retired.

In 1909 he married Frances Blanch Gill. They had one daughter, who followed him in his profession. During most of his professional life he was known to all as "Uncle George". When dignified by the Chair of Surgery, he was known as "The Prof". He, however, leaves us as "Uncle George."