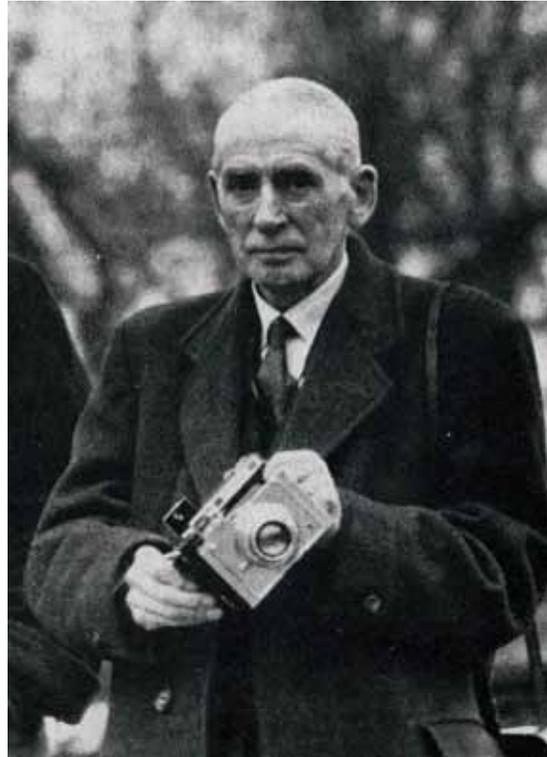


# 'N.K.H': Pioneer and chronicler of medical photography

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Norman Kingsley Harrison, who died at his home in Clacton-on-Sea, Essex on 22nd August 1971 in his eightieth year, was an outstanding example of the true professional. He seemed able to manage with little sleep and filled an extraordinarily long day with a wide range of activities. These he divided between his official duties, writing for journals under his own name and several noms de plume and acting for a number of professional organisations. Norman Harrison will chiefly be remembered as a pioneer and chronicler in the field of medical photography and then journalism in Fleet Street and although he was clearly a successful writer his growing interest in medicine decided him to adopt the far less remunerative and at that time quite unorthodox occupation of a medical photographer; this at the age of 55 years. In 1947 he became photographer to the Royal Hospital of St Bartholomew in the City of London and quickly established one of the biggest departments of medical photography which he administered until his retirement, well beyond the normal age of 65.

For most ordinary mortals the development of something so new and the administration of a very busy service in a leading teaching hospital and medical school would have been more than enough. However, NKH as he came to be known, made himself an essential leader in the evolution of what is now acknowledged to be the best pattern of organised professional medical photography anywhere in the world. A Baptist by faith and deeply attached to the values of tradition, Harrison had a great sense of duty. But even more important was his flexibility of mind and his urge to look ahead and to anticipate the implications and needs of a growing new profession. This he did not see as an inward looking, self conscious body of individuals but as an exciting and potentially important service to medicine. His teaching role in the following organisations will substantiate the contention that Norman Harrison can be described as a catalyst during the formative years of



British medical photography: Vice President of the Royal Photography Society and the Institute of British Photographers, (later the Institute of Incorporated Photographers), Chairman of the Medical Groups of both organisations, Honorary Secretary of the London School of Medical Photography and Member of the Editorial Board of this Journal. It is no exaggeration to say that at this late stage in his life he was an active member of at least six committees at any one time. Many of the early meetings and conferences, which contributed to bring medical photographers together, would not have been possible but for the organising ability of N. K. Harrison. This attribute was derived from his earlier activities as secretary of the Clacton Arts and Literary Society and of the Clacton Chamber of Commerce and also as Election

Agent for a Liberal Party candidate during a Parliamentary General election.

Even this wealth of activities left him with odd moments of time which he filled to good purpose. Harrison remained deeply involved with the affairs of his fellow journalists in Fleet Street and became president of one of their associations. When an occasional weekend offered odd hours of relaxation, he would devote his energies to his caravan and to those who shared his enthusiasm for caravanning. His lively pen could often be found in the pages of a variety of magazines concerned with caravans and the people whose houses on wheels are their hobby.

Harrison's natural ability to listen and to make friends enabled him to document personalities and activities. These chronicles are now the only full records of the history of medical photography in the years immediately following the Second World War. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a Fellow and Honorary Fellow of both the Royal Photographic Society and the Institute of British Photographers. These honours are but a small reflection of the vital contribution which Norman Harrison made to modern professional photography.