



GILLES FORCEPS

Written by: David O'Regan, MD

Gillies dissecting forceps is a multipurpose surgical instrument **used for grasping delicate tissues**. Its narrow profile gives it a special role in deep dissection. The smooth serrated thumb 'grips' give control of the instrument. The jaws also have cross serrations which prevent inadvertent soft tissue damage. The narrow profile of the tip also adds to the precision of the instrument. It must be remembered that forceps can crush and damage tissues.

Sir Harold Delf Gillies was born on June 17, 1882 in Dunedin in New Zealand and attended Wanganui Collegiate School. He was a cousin of Archibald McIndoe. He studied Medicine at Gonville and Caius Cambridge. At the outbreak of war, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corp and was posted to France near Boulogne. He acted as medical minder to a French American dentist, Valadier, who was not allowed to operate unsupervised but was attempting to develop jaw repair work and skin graft. He moved to Paris to work with Hippolyte Morestin who removed a tumour from a face and grafted.



In 1917, he opened Queens Hospital in Sidcup with over 1000 beds and was consultant to the ministry of health during WW1. He had a substantial private practice between the wars and earned £30 000 per year. He was knighted for services to plastic surgery in 1930 and was pioneer of the first sex reassignment surgery of male to female using a flap - technique that was used for the next forty years.

He suffered a stroke while operating at 78. His grandson, Daniel Gillies is an actor who appeared in Spiderman 2.

"A considerable amount of doubting interest was aroused," he wrote. "But when in two weeks the stitches were removed ... there was shining before us the most perfect lid we had so far accomplished"

Source: www.nzedge.com/legends/harold-gillies