

## PREFACE

In September 1990, with the support and encouragement of the Russell Trust, and with additional financial help from the Wellcome Trust, a symposium entitled 'Consciousness and Cognition: Neuropsychological Perspectives' was held at the University of St Andrews. The intention was to assemble a group of the major researchers at the forefront of this field. The meeting proved a great success, and we hope that the chapters of the present volume will help to explain why by conveying some of the excitement of current research and theory in the area.

The starting point for the symposium and for the book was the widespread realization that in several areas of human cognition (e.g. visual perception, memory, language comprehension, and attention), the severe and profound impairments due to brain damage that have been described over the past 150 years are often not absolute. In particular, the use of indirect methods of testing may reveal unsuspected preservation of capacities that are undetected by more traditional direct methods. Since such techniques reveal abilities of which the patient is unaware, these findings have sometimes proved as much a surprise for the patient as for the investigators, and have thrown questions about the relationship between cognition and consciousness into sharp relief. Lawrence Weiskrantz was a major pioneer in what are still the two most intensively investigated of the neurological deficits that give rise to dissociations between 'aware' and 'unaware' processing: amnesia, and 'cortical blindness'. Furthermore, his contributions since those early reports have continued to be highly influential. It is therefore particularly appropriate that he should provide the Introduction to the present volume.

We would like to express our thanks not only to the sponsors of the symposium, and to those contributors to it who are represented in this volume, but also to others whose contributions at the meeting undoubtedly, if covertly, helped shape the contents of the book. We particularly acknowledge the contributions of Daniel Bub, Andrew Ellis, Melvyn Goodale, Michael Kopelman and Patrick Rabbitt. Finally, we thank Andrew Carrick of Academic Press for his organizational help, and Nikki Jones for her untiring secretarial assistance; without them this book could not have been completed in so short a time.

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*St Andrews, April 1991*