

News, Notes, and Queries

Medical Archives and Manuscripts News, 2006

During 2006 the environment in which the provision of public archive services exists continued to be influenced by wider legislative and regulatory currents. No sooner it seems have archivists become accustomed to the operation of Data Protection legislation, which relates exclusively to living people, than there are intimations that the Human Rights Act might apply additionally to the dead. How does this affect access to the records of deceased patients? At the same time Freedom of Information encourages a public expectation of less restrictive access conditions to all sorts of records held by public bodies. Who would be an archivist in the twenty-first century?

The annual digest of accessions to repositories published by the National Archives on its website is unusually difficult to interpret this year as almost all dates seem to have been edited out (see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accessions/2005/05digests/medic.htm>). Fortunately the Wellcome Library has received a fuller copy of the specialist digest for records relating to medicine and health, with dates included. Among the customary mass of hospital and health authority records a few entries stand out: records of the Birmingham Pauper Lunatic Asylum, 1850–72 (Birmingham City Archives); patient case files from St David's Hospital, Carmarthen, c.1895–1948 (Carmarthenshire Archives); a female case book and post-mortem notes from St George's County Asylum, Stafford, 1885–1951 (Staffordshire County Record Office); and a male case book from Royal Earlswood Hospital, Redhill, 1886–91 (Surrey History Centre). Unusually this year a good deal of photographic material was noted, including twentieth-century photographs relating to Standish Hospital (Gloucestershire Archives), and Royal South Hants Hospital (Southampton Archives). Hampshire Record Office has acquired photographs of patients, treatments and x-rays from

Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital, Alton, c.1920–59. Possibly of earlier date are the photographic plates reported by Sutton Local Studies Centre relating to Belmont Hospital and Queen Mary's Hospital for Sick Children, Carshalton.

Among collections of personal and family papers the eye alights on papers of the Dyer family, surgeons of Ringwood, 1801–1912, “including material relating to medical training” (Hampshire Record Office). A search of the Record Office's online catalogue reveals the latter to be letters by Samuel Sumner Dyer (1824–85) to his parents whilst a medical student at King's College London, in the early 1840s; this period coincides with the early years of the first King's College Hospital, so the letters promise to be unusually revealing. An intriguing double accession is suggested by the entries for correspondence and diaries of Catherine Sharp Thackray, psychologist and activist, 1977–97, under West Yorkshire Archive Service, Kirklees, and correspondence of Rebecca Thackray, nurse and teacher, with Catherine Sharp Thackray, 1977–97, under the Women's Library: this no doubt reflects the division of Catherine Thackray's papers, presumably at the insistence of the depositor, since archivists are as a rule loath to divide collections of personal papers between repositories. Several of the individuals named in the digest evidently combined their professional medical career with important extra-curricular interests: Thomas Alcock, surgeon and naturalist, whose diaries, 1859–69, were acquired by Cheshire Archives; Sir John McNeill, surgeon and diplomat, whose letter book, 1852, was received by Glasgow City Archives; Louisa Garrett Anderson, physician and suffragette, whose papers, c.1900–18, were reported by the Women's Library; and Asenath Petrie, psychologist and poet, whose papers include both poems and psychological research notes (Southampton University Library). Papers

of medical historians are also noted: those of the late lamented Joan Lane, a regular contributor to *Medical History*, by the record office of her home county, Warwickshire; papers of Edmund T Price on early radiology by Lothian Health Archives; and papers of Henry Noble, historian of dentistry, by Glasgow University Archives. The entry under Cambridgeshire Record Office for Patrick Norman (*fl.* 1947–91), “writer on windmills and fen drainage”, sets off all sorts of speculations about the medical aspects of his research; these are however swiftly disappointed when it is revealed by the fuller digest that he has slipped into the medical section on the web by accident.

Business records have only a walk-on part this year: minutes of the Surgical Dressing Manufacturers Association, 1936–89, reported by Lancashire Record Office, are perhaps the most important; unquestionably the most unusual are the surviving records of C and G Kearsley Ltd, patent medicine manufacturers of London, whose one product, “Widow Welch’s pills”, marketed from the late eighteenth century to the 1960s, was “justly celebrated for all female complaints” (Wellcome Library). The Wellcome Library as usual dominates the field in respect of professional medical associations and pressure groups, with accessions as varied as the records of the British Society for the Study of Prosthetic Dentistry, the Neonatal Society, Eurotox (the Association of European Toxicologists and European Societies of Toxicology), and the World Federation of Neurology. Perhaps more interesting than any of these however are the records of the British Medical Ultrasound Society, *c.* 1950–99, taken in by Glasgow University Archives, which include deposited papers of several eminent practitioners.

News that the Wellcome Trust funded scheme Research Resources in Medical History has been granted a five-year extension, taking it through to 2011, was both testimony to the success of the scheme since its inception in 2000 and a tonic for the large number of custodians of collections and historians of medicine whose particular areas of the field have yet to feel the benefits of the infusion of dedicated conservation or cataloguing funds. Berkshire Record Office, who received a grant for processing the

records of Fair Mile Hospital, the former County Lunatic Asylum, held a launch event for the archive in October 2006, at which the astonishing range of types of record generated by this psychiatric hospital, from the expected (admissions registers, staff records) to the unexpected (theatrical bills for the regular performances put on by the patients) were on view (see <http://www.berkshirerecordoffice.org.uk/collections/fairmile.htm>). In the future the Fair Mile project might be seen as something of a dry run for tackling the larger archive of Broadmoor Hospital, which Berkshire Record Office has recently succeeded in acquiring.

Another powerful web-based tool of potential interest to medical historians became available during 2006. *Archive Grid* is a searchable online database that brings together data drawn from libraries, archives and museums worldwide, relating to over a million separate collections (see <http://archivegrid.org/web/jsp/index.jsp>). In fact the coverage is heavily concentrated on American institutions, but for most British users this is a strength rather than a weakness, as US institutions contain so much material of British origin and the National Register of Archives and other British-based union databases already cover home terrain pretty comprehensively. One drawback is that this is a subscription database, although users of the Wellcome Library can obtain free access on site. User access to digital surrogates of archival documents rather than merely to catalogue descriptions remains under-developed. The provision of such resources in this country is still largely confined to window dressing catalogue descriptions with a gallery of images or access to digital copies of runs of standard format records of prime interest to genealogists (from whom significant sums to recoup the costs of digitization can be obtained). Cost is indeed the chief impediment to more extensive provision of digital surrogates, but users of archives and others who clamour for more digital resources should remember that, at the same time as apparently providing greater access to records, the process often has the effect of handing even more control to custodians; who after all is likely to select the documents to be digitized and determine how they will be displayed and interpreted?

The Ross Project at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

Funded by the Wellcome Trust's Research Resources in Medical History initiative, the project to re-catalogue and preserve the papers of Sir Ronald Ross (1857–1932) and the Ross Institute was completed in 2006. Ross's collection of 20,000 items includes correspondence, photographs, scientific notebooks, press cuttings and publications. The archive is very rich in material relating to his scientific work, including the correspondence between him and Sir Patrick Manson relating to the work before and during Ross's discovery of the mosquito transmission of malaria in 1897, and to malaria eradication and prevention in various countries including India, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Mauritius, Greece and Italy. It also contains correspondence with other leading medical and tropical medicine specialists such as Sir William Leishman, Sir David Bruce, Joseph Lister, Charles Laveran, Robert Koch and William Gorgas. There are papers relating to Ross's various employments, roles and responsibilities, including his positions in the Indian Medical Service, at the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and in the army during the First World War.

The papers also reflect Ross's other interests, such as his efforts to increase the pay of research workers, and to improve sanitation in the colonies, which involved correspondence with political figures such as J Ramsay MacDonald, Waldorf Astor, J E B Seely and Austen Chamberlain. He was interested in mathematics

and statistics, and wrote a number of publications on these topics, as well as producing fiction and poetry. Ross was a great correspondent, and there are a small number of letters between him and prominent individuals of the time including Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Henry Rider Haggard, H G Wells and Rudyard Kipling.

The papers of the Ross Institute were also catalogued as part of this project. The Ross Institute and Hospital for Tropical Diseases was opened in 1926 on Putney Heath by the Prince of Wales as a memorial to and in recognition of Ross's work. The main focus of the Institute was the study of the nature and treatment, propagation and prevention of tropical disease. Due to financial problems arising after Ross's death in 1932, the Institute was incorporated into the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in 1934, eventually becoming the School's Department of Tropical Hygiene. The hospital became the Ross Ward of the Hospital for Tropical Diseases in central London. The collection includes reports, minutes, and correspondence on the establishment and administration of the Institute, as well as photographs.

A description of each item has been entered in the archive database and the material has been re-housed in acid free enclosures and boxes to ensure its long-term preservation. This collection is now available online at: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/library/archives/>

Joint Cheiron–ESHHS Conference in Dublin, 25–29 June 2007

The 2007 meeting of Cheiron (the International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences) will be a joint meeting with the European Society for the History of the Human Sciences, and will take place from Monday 25 June to Friday 29 June 2007 at University College, Dublin, Ireland.

Papers, posters, symposia, or workshops may deal with any aspect of the history of the behavioral, human, and social sciences or with related historiographic and methodological issues. Submissions must be received by 11 January 2007, and must be sent electronically as an attachment in MSWord (.doc) or .rtf format.

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Please contact one of the Program Co-Chairs if you are unable to submit electronically. They are: Alan Collins, Department of Psychology, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YF, UK; tel: +44 (0)1524 593826; email: a.collins@lancaster.ac.uk; and

Nadine Weidman, Department of History of Science, Sciences Center 371, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, 02138, USA; tel: 00 1 339 221 0900; email: Weidman@fas.harvard.edu. See also the website: <http://people.stu.ca/~cheiron/>

Varieties of Cultural History:
Theory and Practice in the Cultural Histories of Medicine,
Science, Literature and the Arts
5–8 July 2007

A conference on 'Varieties of Cultural History' will be held at the University of Aberdeen, 5–8 July 2007. Keynote speakers will include Peter Burke (Cambridge), Peter Mandler (Cambridge), Crosbie Smith (Kent), Rebecca Spang (Indiana) and Evelyn Welch (Queen Mary, London). For further information contact

Dr David Smith or Dr Ben Marsden, Department of History, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy, University of Aberdeen, Crombie Annexe, Meston Walk, Aberdeen AB24 3FX, UK; email: d.f.smith@abdn.ac.uk; b.marsden@abdn.ac.uk; tel: +44 (0)1224 272 637; website: <http://www.easst.net/node/1119>

Call for Papers
Disease, Disability and Medicine in Early Medieval Europe,
AD 400–1200: Concepts of Health and the Healthy Body
School of English Studies,
University of Nottingham
6–7 July 2007

The second conference on 'Disease, Disability and Medicine in Early Medieval Europe, AD 400–1200' will focus on questions of what constitutes a healthy body in the medieval world, health care, cure and the language of care. The meeting aims to be a forum for scholars working on the topic in a variety of disciplines and regions of Northern Europe, including all aspects of disease, disability and medicine. The conference aims to foster interdisciplinary approaches and

we invite contributions from archaeology, palaeopathology, history of medicine, as well as history of religion, philosophy, linguistic and historical sciences. If you wish to participate, please send an abstract (no more than 300 words) to Dr Christina Lee (School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, Trent Building, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD); email: Christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk by 28 February 2007.

Environment Health & History
Conference, 12–15 September 2007

Organized by the Centre for History in Public Health, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, on behalf of the European Association for the History of Medicine and Health,

a conference on 'Environment Health and History' will be held at the Brunei Gallery, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, London WC1H 0XG, 12–15 September 2007. Keynote speakers

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will be: Professor Chris Hamlin (Notre Dame University, Indiana), Professor Dieter Schott (Darmstadt University of Technology, Germany), and Professor Chris Sellers (State University of New York at Stony Brook). For further information contact: Ingrid James,

Centre for History in Public Health, LSHTM, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT, UK; email: Ingrid.james@lshtm.ac.uk; tel: +44 (0)207 927 2434; website: <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/history/EAHMcallforpapers.html>

The Bakken Library and Museum

The Bakken Library and Museum, Minneapolis, offers Research Travel Grants and Visiting Research Fellowships for the purpose of facilitating research in its collection of books, journals, manuscripts, prints, and instruments. **Travel Grants** up to a maximum of \$500 (domestic) and \$750 (foreign) are to be used to help to defray the expenses of travel, subsistence, and other direct costs of conducting research at The Bakken. The minimum period of residence is one week. Application may be made any time during the calendar year.

Visiting Research Fellowships up to a maximum of \$1,500 are to be used to help to

defray the expenses of travel, subsistence, and other direct costs of conducting research at The Bakken. The minimum period of residence is two weeks. Preference is given to researchers who are interested in collaborating for a day or two during their research visit with The Bakken on exhibits or other programmes. The next deadline is 16 February 2007. For more details and application guidelines, please contact: Elizabeth Ihrig, Librarian, The Bakken Library and Museum, 3537 Zenith Avenue So., Minneapolis, MN., 55416, USA; tel: 001 612 926 3878 ext. 227; fax: 001 612 927-7265; e-mail lhrieg@thebakken.org

British Society for the History of Paediatrics and Child Health William Cadogan Prize

The BSHPCH is offering a £250 prize for an original essay of up to 3000 words on any aspect of the history of paediatrics and child health, in any period of time or place. The prize has been established in memory of Dr William Cadogan (1711–1797) of Bristol, an eminent pioneer of child health care and father of infant care in Britain. As well as the prize, the winner will be invited to give a presentation to the autumn

meeting of the Society. The closing date is 1 April 2007 and the winner will be notified in early July of that year. Further enquiries (and submissions) should be directed to the Secretary: Mr Robert Arnott, Director, Centre for the History of Medicine, The Medical School, University of Birmingham, Birmingham B15 2TT, UK; email: r.g.arnott@bham.ac.uk