

News, Notes, and Queries

Medical Archives and Manuscripts News 2001

In recent years archives in Britain have enjoyed the unfamiliar experience of recognition by government and the various funding bodies as an integral part of the national heritage. For long a Cinderella service, associated in the public mind with musty basements and mole-like custodians, the world of archives is benefiting enormously from the change in official and public perceptions and the opportunities provided by digital technology and the internet to finally bring the archival resources of the country into the light. There are now more funds available not only for acquiring archives and manuscripts but for conserving and cataloguing them. It has long been easier to persuade funding bodies to finance acquisitions than the more prosaic but no less important processing tasks (rather as the Heritage Lottery Fund lavishes money on museum capital projects but is less enthusiastic about maintenance grants). Happily, the new climate of facilitating wider public access to collections, allied to the appeal of electronic finding aids, has lent to the core archival task of cataloguing a recognition that it never possessed in the days of the paper list. Medical archives are especially fortunate as the beneficiaries of the Wellcome Trust's *Research Resources in Medical History* scheme to improve access and promote preservation, which made its first awards in 2001.

A brief visit to the PRO at Kew alone would be enough to banish the image of the dismal basement once and for all, and it is appropriate that the government archive service should be coordinating national efforts to network data about England's archival holdings through the Access to Archives (A2A) initiative: the A2A database provides access to catalogues of collections in scores of repositories, searchable by free-text keyword, authority-controlled proper

names and subjects, and by dates (www.a2a.pro.gov.uk). Most of the catalogues available through A2A are supplied by local record offices, and although there is medical-related content it is not especially prominent. Of more immediate interest to historians of medicine is a separate archival networking initiative, AIM25 (archives in London and the M25 area), that provides access via its website to descriptions of archive collections in higher education institutions in greater London, as well as in the royal colleges of medicine, the Royal Society and the Wellcome Library (www.aim25.ac.uk). Searches can be made of the catalogue text, and of the various name and subject indexes.

At a more specialist level still, two further electronic resources became available during 2001. The Wellcome Library's Medical Archives and Manuscripts Survey (MAMS), providing detailed descriptions of medical-related primary research material in greater London, 1600–1945, was mounted on the Web (www.wellcome.ac.uk/mams). MAMS is not a searchable database, but merely a vast Word document accessible on-line: however, the astonishing range and depth of coverage makes it quite unique as a special subject resource. More specialist yet is the Wellcome Trust-funded Business Archives Council database, *Historical Records of Veterinary Medicine in the UK*: this was mentioned in these pages last year and is now completed. Access to both this and the earlier BAC database, *Historical Records of the British Pharmaceutical Industry*, is available in the Wellcome Library.

The annual survey of accessions to repositories relating to health and medicine during 2000, published by the Historical Manuscripts Commission (www.hmc.gov.uk/accessions), reveals the usual preponderance of late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century hospital and health authority records. In

general the records transferred are administrative rather than clinical, although there are some exceptions, including a pauper casebook for Haydock Lodge Asylum, 1872–78 (Lancashire Record Office), casebooks of St George's County Asylum, Stafford, 1903–11 (Staffordshire Record Office), case files of Little Plumstead Hospital (formerly Little Plumstead Mental Deficiency Institution), c. 1930–1990 (Norfolk Record Office), and patient case files of Graylingwell Hospital, Chichester, twentieth century (West Sussex Record Office). Norfolk Record Office also took in physicians' journals for the County Lunatic Asylum, 1817–20, 1835–39. Few business records are noted, the only substantial exceptions being designs of Henry Wadsworth & Son, sanitary implement manufacturers of Halifax, c. 1896–1900 (West Yorkshire Archive Service, Calderdale), and treatment books and financial records of Davison Veterinary Surgeons of Nottingham, 1935–91 (Nottinghamshire Archives).

Accessions of personal papers are mainly those of medical professionals, and include correspondence of Col. E T Harris concerning his service with the Indian Medical Service in East Africa, 1914–16, and papers of a nurse, Annie Hills, relating to service aboard hospital ships in the Mediterranean and in East Africa, 1915–18 (Imperial War Museum). Two names to conjure with are represented in the accessions to the Wellcome Library, the epidemiologist Sir Richard Doll and the cardiac surgeon Sir Terence English. In addition, the year was notable for the accession of papers of three medical historians: Helen Brock, the William Hunter scholar (Glasgow University Library), James Lefanu, librarian of the Royal College of Surgeons (RCS), and James Johnston Abraham, biographer of John Coakley Lettsom (Trinity College Dublin); other Abraham papers appeared for sale more recently at a public auction in Sussex in September 2001, where they were

purchased by the bookseller Maggs, and how these relate to the TCD accession is not clear. Meanwhile, accessions of records of NGOs are typically the speciality of the Wellcome Library, and 2000 was no exception: accessions included records of the British Society of Paediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition, the Society for Research into Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida, and Women's Health Concern. Elsewhere accessions of such material ranged from the worthy (Invalid Children's Aid Nationwide, London Metropolitan Archives) to the faintly ridiculous (Saltcoats and District Vegetarian Society, Ayrshire Archives).

The market for medical manuscripts remains buoyant. This is both a blessing and a curse: on the one hand it encourages owners of manuscripts to bring them to the attention of dealers and custodians for possible purchase, and thereby release them into circulation; on the other it tempts institutional owners as a source of much-needed funds. Earlier this year, for instance, historical collections from the School of Anatomy at Cambridge University were sold without the university archives apparently having the chance to acquire the manuscript components. At the time of writing, the biggest sale of medical-related manuscripts in 2001 promises to be the sale of Harvey papers at Bloomsbury Book Auctions on 22 November. In 1821 the descendants of Eliab Harvey, Dr William Harvey's younger brother, sealed various family papers into a sturdy chest, which remained unopened till early 2001. On inspection the older documents turned out to be mainly title deeds, some indeed concerning William Harvey himself, but none having any bearing on his medical career. Only one document is substantially in Harvey's own hand, his will, proved in 1659, the contents of which were already well-known.

Richard Aspin

Call for Papers
2002 Annual Meeting of Cheiron

Cheiron, the International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences, calls for proposals for the 34th annual meeting, which will be held from 26 to 30 June 2002, at the University of Oregon in Eugene, Oregon, USA. Papers, posters, symposia, or workshops that concern the history of the behavioral or social sciences or related historiographical and methodological issues may be submitted. Three copies of each proposal must be submitted in printed form and must be received by 14 January 2002. Additional

information about programme submissions may be obtained from Hans Pols, Cheiron Program Chair, Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research, Rutgers University, 30 College Avenue, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 08901, USA; electronic mail: pols@rci.rutgers.edu; tel: (201) 330-1449; fax: (732) 932-6872. Additional information about the meeting and about the submission of proposals is available on the Cheiron web page at <http://www.psych.yorku.ca/orgs/cheiron/>.

Call for Papers
History of Psychiatry and Mental Health Care in Eastern Europe
University of Amsterdam, 8–12 July 2002

The current advances in the history of European psychiatry have been dominated by accounts focused on north-western Europe, particularly the United Kingdom, France and Germany. Such literature as exists in the west about eastern Europe flows from the ideological tensions of the Cold War. It is now more than a decade since the fall of the wall, and it is high time for this received structure to be re-assessed. The evidence suggests that the histories of psychiatry and mental health care in eastern Europe proceeded along very different lines than their counterparts in the west, and not lines that are appropriately reduced simplistically to the story of the political uses of psychiatry. The arrival of communist regimes, be that at the revolution in 1917 or after the Second World War, altered intellectual alliances, changed the social context of treatment

provision and affected the course of clinical practice much more broadly.

To consider these developments, papers are invited for presentation to the 27th International Congress of the International Academy of Law and Mental Health at the University of Amsterdam, from 8 to 12 July 2002. While the focus of the overall congress will be on law and mental health, papers for this stream of the conference are not required to have a legal component (although papers with such a focus are, of course, welcome). Information about the Academy generally, as well as the programme of previous conferences, can be found at the Academy website: <http://www.ialmh.org>. Persons interested in offering a paper should submit an abstract to Peter Bartlett (peter.bartlett@nottingham.ac.uk) by 30 January 2002.

Society for the Social History of Medicine
2002 Prize Essay Competitions

The Society for the Social History of Medicine (SSHM) invites submissions for its two 2002 Prize Essay Competitions. These prizes will be awarded to the best original, unpublished essays in the social history of medicine submitted to each competition as judged by the SSHM's assessment panel. The 2002 essay competition is open to post-doctoral scholars and faculty who obtained their PhD or equivalent qualification after 31 December 1996. The 2002 student essay competition is open to students in full- or part-time education. Each prizewinner will

be awarded £300, and his or her entry may also be published in the journal, *Social History of Medicine*. The deadline for entries is: 31 December 2002.

Further details and entry forms can be down-loaded from the SSHM's website <http://www.sshm.org>. Alternatively, please contact: David Cantor, Division of Cancer Prevention, National Cancer Institute, Executive Plaza North, Suite 2025, 6130 Executive Boulevard, Bethesda, MD 20892-7309, USA. Email: competition@sshm.org.

Call for Submissions

Forum for History of Human Science Dissertation Award

The Forum for History of Human Science invites submissions for its Dissertation Award for 2002. Entries are encouraged from authors in any discipline as long as the dissertation is related to the history of the human sciences, broadly constructed. Dissertations submitted between 1999 and 2001, inclusive, may be submitted. The winner of the 2002 Dissertation Award, to which a \$100 monetary award is attached, will be announced at the Annual Meeting of the

Forum for History of Human Science, which will be held in conjunction with the History of Science Society meeting, which will be held 7–10 November 2002 in Milwaukee, WI. Send three copies of the dissertation by 1 June 2002 to Dr Nadine Weidman, Secretary Forum for the History of Human Science, 138 Woburn St, Medford, MA 02155, USA. Additional information may be obtained at the Forum's web-site, <http://www.majbill.vt.edu/history/jones/fhhs/fhhs.htm>.