



HISTORY CENTRE NEWSLETTER

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NHS 60

Centre members are involved in a number of events to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the NHS.

Virginia Berridge recently gave a public lecture at Gresham College on the origins of the NHS. Virginia pointed to the paradox of the NHS: that the pre war systems of health insurance and of health services based and funded in local government, founded on the public health system, were replaced in 1948 by a new system, centrally tax funded and hospital based. Her lecture showed how this transition came about and the compromises which were made along the way. The NHS was set up as tripartite system with the health centre intended as the unifying mechanism across the three arms of the service. That never happened, but now the idea is back on the agenda through the idea of the 'polyclinic' in Lord Darzi's review of health services. Virginia drew attention to problems of the NHS structure, including the lack of local democracy and the boundaries between health and social care, which have dogged the service from the start.

Virginia is also contributing a History and Policy feature on the NHS to *BBC History* and is one of the judges of a NHS60 competition being run by the *Health Service Journal*.

In November the Centre is organising two other NHS-themed events. Our annual Centre Lecture, on November 12th, will be given by Rudolf Klein, and is entitled "The Bevan-Morrison debate: the shape of things to come in the NHS?" Professor Klein is a distinguished policy analyst and commentator on the British health services, and his history of the NHS is now in its 5th edition (*The new politics of the NHS: from creation to reinvention*). His lecture will tackle the issue of central/local relations, from the inception of the service to the 'new localism' of today.



Nurse and patient in early NHS hospital in Birmingham
Image courtesy of Wellcome Library, London

Also on November 12th a one-day conference will be held on the 'History of Management and Administration in the NHS.' The contested balance of power between clinicians and managers in the service has been a controversial feature of its existence since the Thatcher era. Before this it's assumed the NHS was under-managed, but is this correct? And how did administrators seek to measure and improve

performance before the 1980s? How have managers responded to the repeated restructuring of recent years? What are the key issues confronting them today as they respond to reconfiguration, market pressures and patient involvement? These are the issues we will address in the conference, whose speakers will be announced in the near future.

Virginia Berridge & Martin Gorsky

New Research in the Centre

A project developing an existing database of British voluntary hospital statistics into a web resource has recently begun. The database contains a wealth of information about the provision and utilisation of beds and services and also finances in the period 1891-1947: on-line access will enable other researchers to use this valuable resource. The project is led by Dr Martin Gorsky (Centre for History in Public Health) and Professor John Mohan (Southampton) and funded by the Wellcome Trust. Dr Rachel Herring (Centre for History in Public Health) is the researcher and Dan Forys (LSHTM) will design and implement the website.

Rachel Herring

News from the Archives

The first phase of the project to catalogue the WELL resource collection, which consists of published and archive material relating to water, sanitation and environmental health has been completed. An estimated 1400 items are now searchable on the Archives website, including the papers of Richard

Feachem. The resource has been stored and maintained by the Environmental Health Group. It is hoped to continue the project to complete the cataloguing of the collection in the near future. An exhibition on the International Year of Sanitation is planned for June which will comprise of material taken from various collections held in the School Archives.



A photograph from the Richard Feachem collection depicting efforts to improve the water supply in Africa, 1970s

Victoria Cranna continues work on the information audit and she is starting to write up the results and recommendations. The initial recommendations were presented to the Information Services Advisory Group on 29th April.

The School will be participating in the London Festival of Architecture on Friday 4th July. There will be two tours of the building at lunchtime, a talk by the architect/project manager of the North and South Courtyard buildings and an exhibition of the building in the foyer.

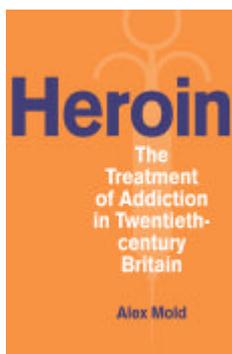
Richard Meunier and Victoria Cranna have also been working on implementing an image database for the School. This will store all the School's images (archival and current) as well as video and audio files and will be

accessible to both academic and support staff.

A UCL placement student has been cataloguing papers of the Ross Institute, mainly relating to the work of Professor George MacDonald and the India branch. Victoria Cranna also attended a UCL Special Collection meeting and Digital Preservation workshop at British Library.

Richard Meunier

New Books



Alex Mold, *Heroin: The Treatment of Addiction in Twentieth Century Britain* (De Kalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2008)

Heroin, often viewed as the 'hardest drug', looms large in the popular consciousness. Heroin addiction first began to cause concern during the 1920s, yet while one group of doctors regarded addiction as a disease which required treatment, other physicians regarded it as a vice which demanded strict control. In *Heroin* Alex Mold examines the interaction of the different approaches to heroin addiction and argues that the treatment of addiction as a disease and the control of heroin as a

social problem could, in practice, rarely be separated. Drawing on government papers, private archival collections, medical journals, oral history sources and official reports, Alex's book is the first detailed historical analysis on the subject.

Forthcoming Events

Seminars

Dr James Gillespie, (University of Sydney). *'The History of an Institutional Culture: WHO and the Problem of Tuberculosis'* Thursday, 22nd May 2008, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm Venue: The Bennett Room (LG 80), Keppel Street Building

Public Health History Walks

Our ever popular public health history walks are going from strength to strength. In March and April Ros Stanwell Smith conducted a walk entitled 'In the steps of the medical detective' which traced the history of the infamous epidemic of cholera during the nineteenth century. The mysterious origins of this outbreak were solved by Dr John Snow. This year is the 150th anniversary of Snow's death and it is also the WHO Year of Sanitation. To celebrate these events Ros will be organising a walk for the general public on the theme of sanitation. This will take place on Monday 16th June meeting at Embankment tube station at 5 pm. The walk will end at the John Snow Pub in Soho. The walk is free but places are limited to 20, please book with Ingrid James (Ingrid.James@lshtm.ac.uk). The walk will be repeated if it is a success!