With the success of the Olympics clear in everybody’s minds it is the perfect opportunity to reflect on our own contribution.

Our Olympic Showcase aimed to highlight the early advances made in connecting health and sport. The key figure in the exhibition was Professor Jerry Morris the ‘inventor of exercise’ whose research showed that exercise reduces the risk of coronary heart disease.

The publication of his article ‘Coronary Heart-Disease and Physical Activity of Work’ in The Lancet in 1953 marked a turning point in our understanding of the factors behind chronic diseases. Jerry saw the link between physical exercise and the prevention of heart disease, cancer, diabetes and even depression and essentially proved that exercise helps to lengthen lives. As part of his pioneering study amongst people of different professions, the most striking results came from a study of London bus workers. Drivers of buses who were sedentary for 90 per cent of their shifts were shown to have substantially more heart attacks than the conductors, who would climb up and down 750 steps a day.

From 1967 until his death at the age of 99, he was based at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. As Professor of Community Health he used epidemiology to explore disparities in health provision. He also had a major influence on government health policy through his involvement in various committees on smoking, air pollution and inequalities in health.

In response to his work promoting good health through exercise Professor Morris was awarded the first international Olympic medal and prize in exercise science in 1996.

The exhibition also looked at the work of Sir Ronald Ross, who was present at the Athens Olympic Games in 1906 whilst advising the Lake Kopais Company of London on reducing malaria in the country. We even have a postcard from the games in our Ross collection.

Additionally we had displays promoting current research projects at the school, including the Olympic Regeneration in East London (ORiEL) longitudinal study on young people in the host boroughs.

Rachael Thompson
Collecting Parish Registers for Historical Demography in Malawi

This summer I began fieldwork for the project ‘African Historical Demography Using Parish Registers 1900-2000’ with a visit to Mua Parish in Central Malawi. The Catholic mission at Mua is one of the oldest in the country, founded in 1902 by the international missionary society known as the White Fathers. I didn’t know what to expect as I walked up the dusty track from the main road, but I was certainly impressed to arrive at the stunning red brick church and mission building, with its cloistered verandahs and large courtyard, where a vicious turkey competed with pigs and guinea-fowl for shade under the lemon trees.

The history of the mission and its interaction with the local population is beautifully documented in the neighbouring Kungoni Centre for Culture and Art (see web link), first established by Father Claude Boucher in 1976. Here I watched performances of the gule wamkulu, the great dance of the Chewa, and learnt about how customs surrounding fertility, marriage and mortality had changed over time, both because of the growth of Catholicism, and because of wider socio-economic influences. Father Claude shared with me copies of all of the missionary diaries which were kept from 1902 onwards, documenting the daily life of the parish - including details on agriculture, rainfall, epidemics, famine and culture - which will be invaluable in reconstructing the demographic history of the parish. The parish registers themselves were perfectly preserved, including family cards with data on marital breakdown, migration, occupation and health. I took over 50,000 photographs of these registers, and am now entering and linking the data into longitudinal, relational database for demographic analysis.

Thank you to Fathers Brendan, Paul, Seba and Claude for introducing me to Mua!

http://www.kungoni.org/
www.kasiyamaliro.org/

Sarah Walters
Research Fellow

Photographs are the author’s own
Metropolitan Medical Officers: local leadership, democracy and shaping environments for health in London, 1919-1939

This two-year research project explores the role of London’s local public health doctors, the Medical Officers of Health (MOsH), during the interwar years. From 1872 to 1974, MOsH were appointed by local authorities to oversee the health of their communities and were required to produce yearly reports. The Wellcome Library is currently undertaking a major digitisation project of the whole run of these annual reports, in conjunction with which it is funding this research.

Although they had a clear remit to promote population health, MOsH are the subject of debate among historians, who disagree about their effectiveness, in particular during the first half of the twentieth century. Can they best be characterised, in John Welshman’s memorable phrase, as ‘watchdogs or lapdogs’? I will be interrogating the newly digitised archive of annual reports to explore this contested question of the success or failure of locally-administered public health programmes, in the so far under-examined context of London, and during what has been characterised as the zenith of local government in the ‘twenties and ‘thirties. Recently, the structure of English public health has been reconfigured, returning significant powers to local government and reintroducing local public health officials. This revival of localism in public health policy creates a timely moment to revisit debates about the effectiveness of decentralised health governance.

The project considers three main areas. First, how strong was the leadership shown by MOsH in interwar London? Second, to what extent did they engage with the social determinants of health by attempting to tackle economic and environmental causes of disease, and with what effect? Finally, what was the interaction of MOsH with local democratic processes and what effect, if any, did these have on their work? As well as academic outputs, including journal articles and a conference, there will be several outputs concerned with public engagement, including web content and a guided walk in London, based on material from the archive.

Jane K. Seymour
Wellcome Library Fellow

History Centre PhD student at Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology

Between April and June this year I was awarded the opportunity to work in the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST) through a Wellcome Trust postgraduate fellowship. My PhD is on the history of disability policy in the UK from the sixties through to the nineties, and I was asked to write a briefing for Parliament on the tests currently used to determine whether someone is eligible for out-of-work disability benefits.

The experience was a positive one. I was able to use not only my historical knowledge but also my research skills to investigate a topic of contemporary political importance. As a result of the work, a seminar is being held in the House of Commons in November to bring together Parliamentarians to discuss the subject.

The experience shows that historians can play an important role in providing evidence to policy makers. Historians can often answer key questions about why policy is the way that it is; which decisions have been made to try and alter this in the past; and whether these decisions broadly achieved their goals. From my experience, Westminster has a fairly short memory, and often does not appreciate that decisions taken twenty, fifty or a hundred years ago can give vital evidence to those trying to form policy today.

The briefing is available through the Houses of Parliament website at http://www.parliament.uk/post.

Gareth Millward
PhD Student
The Blind in Dutch Society in the 20th Century

Since the end of August to the beginning of November I have the honor to be visiting researcher at the Center for History in Public Health. During this period I have mainly visited the archives of the LSHTM and the Wellcome Library. I have looked through the relevant periodicals of Tropical Medicine and the early papers of the two Schools of Tropical Medicine in London and Liverpool from the forefield of their foundation up to the First World War.

The overall research project explores the manyfold entanglements between British, German and French public health institutions that were founded around 1900. On several institutions secondary literature already exists, but none of the literature has reflected their entanglement and their relation to each other upon an European level.

In all institutions, basic research was conducted to control infectious diseases, but with different research agendas. Some institutes focussed on the transmission and distribution of infectious diseases, on bacteriological and epidemiological aspects, on geographical specialities like tropical diseases, other institutes were dedicated to experimental therapy.

Already the comparison between the two Schools of Tropical Medicine in London and Liverpool makes clear, that, despite their common research topic, they offered different solutions for the control of tropical diseases, they had a different institutional setting and organization, and they were linked in different ways to the state. But already the fact that there were different competing institutes on the same topic distinguishes the development in Britain in comparison to France or Germany.

The research project investigates the motives that led to the foundation of the public health institutes, their program, their legal constitution and funding, their staff members, the everyday life, and the institutional establishment during the first years. The investigation is focussed on questions about how national styles influenced their foundation, legitimation and the establishment of the institutes, and, corresponding to these institutional issues, how national styles influenced the institutionalisation of public health and how the different national styles determine how institutions think.

Visiting Researcher: Axel C. Huentelmann, Institute for the History Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz

The Blind in Dutch Society in the 20th Century

Since the end of August the beginning of November I have the honor to be visiting researcher at the Center for History in Public Health. During this period I am mainly working on the international comparative dimension of my PhD-project about the in- and exclusion of the blind in Dutch society in the 20th century. That is a real pleasure with the rich collections of the Wellcome Library and the Royal National Institute of the Blind just around the corner. In my comparative research I am focussing on the comparison between Britain and the Netherlands, not only because there is a lot of literature, but also because some interesting differences and similarities in the way visual impairment was approached in the two countries. So the Dutch social policy towards the blind took another track than in Britain because the lack of rehabilitation practices, the slow implementation of the Beveridge report and the non-existence of a strong disability movement. During my stay in London I also hope to learn from the expertise of the center and the school, especially in connecting writing history to public policy making. In the Netherlands historians have relatively little experience in making this connection, but the tide is turning: at the end of November I have to present the preliminary results of my dissertation at the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport in The Hague.

Visiting researcher ChiPH: Paul van Trigt, VU University Amsterdam
2012-13 History Centre Seminar Series: Drink, Drugs and Past Public Health

In the Autumn term our seminar series theme is inspired by an important, if little observed, centenary – that of the 1912 Hague International Opium Convention. This marked the start of global efforts to address substance use through a system of prohibition – efforts which have continued in different forms and fora up until the present. Two papers (Dave Bewley Taylor’s and John Collins’s) pick up the theme of international regulation, looking at how the system has evolved in different historical periods and uncovering the interests and powers that underlay a policy often marked by, at best, limited success. Two other papers examine regulatory frameworks for alcohol, with James Kneale digging far back in time to look at how the life insurance industry played a part in formulating the earliest concepts of safety around drink, and Robert Duncan homing in on Britain in the First World War, when the modern system of alcohol licensing in this country was born.

Moving into the New Year, we’ll present a series of speakers discussing new research on different aspects of the British health system before the establishment of the NHS. Nick Whitfield explores the case of blood donation, whose history has been entangled with philosophical discussion about whether the ‘gift’ of blood signifies our capacity for true altruism. Nick Hayes and Barry Doyle present some revisionist findings on the functioning and popularity of the hospital system just prior to the NHS, which cast doubt on just how deep the consensus in favour of the new service really was. Rebecca Whyte goes back further in time to look at the history of one of the classic functions of public health work: disinfection.

Seminar Series: ‘Listen Again’ Initiative

This year for the first time we will be making some of the seminars available for ‘listen again’ audiocasts, so if you miss one or would like to take a further listen, you will be able to find a link from the Centre’s website.

New Centre Film Series

The Centre for History in Public Health is committed to engaging with a variety audiences both within and outside the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. In addition to our new series of public seminars, and the guided history walks led by Ros Stanwell-Smith, the Centre is continuing with its programme of historical public health film screenings, which are free and open to all. Previous series have focused on such topics as the history of smoking, sex education and the origins of the NHS, and have been well received by staff and students. This term we are concentrating on a particular theme: mental health, trauma and rehabilitation in the 20th century.

The line up includes Neuro Psychiatry (1943), a documentary from the Second World War focusing on the neuro-psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation of neurotic soldiers and civilians by the Emergency Medical Service; the pioneering silent film War Neuroses (1918), about the symptomatology of ‘shell-shock’ and its treatment by two Royal Army Medical Corps neurologists in the First World War; and Imagining Robert (2002), a documentary about two brothers, one who has suffered from mental illness for over 38 years, the other a prize-winning novelist who has been his primary carer over this period. Sarah Chaney from the UCL Centre for the History of Psychological Disciplines and the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archive and Museum Service will introduce This is Your Hospital, a 2011 documentary about the Warlingham Park Hospital in Croydon (formerly the Croydon Mental Hospital), featuring interviews with former staff, patients and their relatives. This will be accompanied by an episode of the BBC’s The Hurt Mind series from 1957, focusing on the use of physical treatments such as electroconvulsive therapy (ECT).

The film series will be of special interest to staff and students of the LSHTM Centre for Global Mental Health.

Please see our website or e-flyer for dates and times. Please note that films contain images and scenes some people may find distressing.
Autumn Term

The Centre for History in Public Health presents

(Joint with Centre for Research on Drugs and Health Behaviour)

David Bewley-Taylor (Swansea University)

‘W(h)ither International Drug Control? Learning from the UNGASS Decade’
Wednesday, 10th October 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm
Venue: Jerry Morris A, Tavistock Place

James Kneale (University College London)

‘Moderate Drinking Before The Unit: Medicine and Life Assurance in Britain and the US, c.1860-1930’
Wednesday, 24th October 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm
Venue: Jerry Morris A, Tavistock Place

John Collins (London School of Economics)

‘Breaking the Monopoly System: American influence on the British decision to prohibit opium smoking and end its Asian monopolies, 1939-1943’
Wednesday, 31st October 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm
Venue: Jerry Morris A, Tavistock Place

Robert Duncan

‘Pubs and Patriots: The Drink Crisis during the First World War’
Wednesday, 21st November 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm
Venue: Jerry Morris A, Tavistock Place

Nick Whitfield (McGill University)

‘A Genealogy of the Gift: Blood Donation and Altruism in an Age of Strangers’
Wednesday, 5th December 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm
Venue: Jerry Morris A, Tavistock Place

ALL ARE WELCOME

Funded by the Wellcome Trust
Organiser: Martin Gorsky. To be put on the mailing list contact Ingrid.james@lshtm.ac.uk. To view abstracts:
http://history.lshtm.ac.uk/seminars.html
The Centre for History in Public Health*

PUBLIC HEALTH HISTORY WALKS

‘ROUND THE BLOCK’

The walls of the School, celebrate discoveries from antisepsis to zoonoses. But Bloomsbury has been the home and work place for many trail blazers. This short lunchtime walk gives you the chance to hear tales from the history of public health and some of the fascinating characters who made Bloomsbury such an inspiring area.

Thursday, 18th October 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm

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‘FURTHER ROUND THE BLOCK’

A slightly longer lunchtime walk in which we explore some of the streets around the School – with stories about the School and Bloomsbury’s history on the way.

Wednesday, 21st November 2012, 12.45 pm – 2.15 pm

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‘ON THE TRAIL OF THE MEDICAL DETECTIVE’

Follow in the steps of Dr John Snow, hero of the Broad St pump cholera outbreak, who is 200 years old next year. This start to the bicentenary celebrations begins at LSHTM and meanders through interesting parts of Soho with stories about the medical and other characters that lived there before and after Snow.

Wednesday, 12th December 2012, 5.00 pm – 6.45 pm

All walks are led by Dr Ros Stanwell-Smith, a Public Health Consultant who is also a Blue Badge Guide

Meet in the reception hall at LSHTM, Keppel Street Building

Each Walk is free. Numbers are limited (20 places). If you would like to participate, please book with Ingrid James: Tel: 020 7927 - 2434 or email ingrid.james@lshtm.ac.uk

All Walks are Funded by the Wellcome Trust
HISTORY, HEALTH AND FILMS: A SERIES OF LUNCHTIME FILMS ON PUBLIC HEALTH HISTORY

Mental Health, Trauma and Rehabilitation

Wednesday, 14th November 2012. Venue: John Snow Lecture Theatre, Keppel Street Building

Neuro Psychiatry (1943, 62 mins B&W).

Wartime documentary film, produced for the Ministry of Health on behalf of the Ministry of Information, about the neuro-psychiatric treatment and rehabilitation (including subsequent job placement) of neurotic civilians and soldiers in an unnamed Home Counties hospital by the Emergency Medical Services (the wartime nationalised health service).

Tuesday, 27th November 2012. Venue: John Snow Lecture Theatre, Keppel Street Building

War Neuroses (1917, 27 mins, B&W, si).

Silent film showing the symptomatology of ‘shell-shock’ in 18 British ‘other rankers’, and its treatment by two leading RAMC (Royal Army Medical Corps) neurologists in two British military hospitals towards the end of the First World War.

Tuesday, 4th December 2012. Venue: John Snow Lecture Theatre, Keppel Street Building


A documentary about chronic mental illness and its impact on families. Imagining Robert tells the story of two brothers, one who has suffered the horrors and sadness of mental illness for 38 years, the other, a prize-winning novelist who has been his brother’s primary carer over these years. Introduced by Alex Cohen, Centre for Global Mental Health, LSHTM

Wednesday, 12th December 2012. Venue: John Snow Lecture Theatre, Keppel Street Building

This is Your Hospital (2011, 30 mins, col).

Documentary about the Warlingham Park Hospital, originally opened in 1903 as the Croydon Mental Hospital. The film combines historic footage with interviews with former staff, patients and their relatives. Introduced by Sarah Chaney, UCL Centre for the History of Psychological Disciplines and the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum.

The Hurt Mind: Physical Treatment (1957, 30 mins, B&W)

Episode of the BBC’s The Hurt Mind documentary series from 1957, where leading psychiatrists and research workers describe physical treatments for mental illness. Includes a demonstration of how electroconvulsive therapy is administered and an explanation of frontal leucotomy as well as a session of ether abreaction.

Films start at 12.45 pm – 2.00 pm

All welcome. Special thanks to the Wellcome Trust and the BFI. Please note films contain scenes of physical treatment which some people may find distressing.

Organised by the Centre for History in Public Health. To be added to the mailing list contact Ingrid James (Ingrid.james@lshtm.ac.uk)
The Centre for History in Public Health was established in 2003, having originally developed from the AIDS Social History Programme in the late 1980s. Its location within a multi-disciplinary public health institution is unique, and keeps it firmly in the forefront of historical research into public health, and health services.

The CHiPH mission:
To promote and undertake high quality research in order to contribute to the development of the historical discipline and to historical understanding in the field of public health policy.

The Director of ChiPH is Professor Virginia Berridge.