

News, Notes, and Queries

Medical Archives and Manuscripts News 2000

The annual digest of medical-related accessions to repositories during 1999 compiled by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts (<http://www.hmc.gov.uk>) shows an inevitable preponderance of twentieth-century material finding its way into record offices. This modern material is neatly summarized in *History of Twentieth Century Medicine Newsletter*, issue 22. A noteworthy feature of the older accessions in 1999 was the number of transfers of records of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century chemists' and druggists' businesses into publicly-accessible repositories, a trend that may not be unconnected with the recent Business Archives Council survey of records of the British pharmaceutical industry. The database compiled from the survey is now accessible electronically in the Wellcome Library and at the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine at the University of East Anglia. Outstanding among these businesses is Macfarlan Smith Ltd, manufacturing chemists of Edinburgh, one of the early nineteenth-century British pioneers of the manufacture of alkaloids, whose records were acquired by Edinburgh City Archives (although they apparently date back to 1860 only). Other firms whose records have passed into public repositories include William Butler and Co. (Bristol) Ltd, chemists and druggists, nineteenth to twentieth century (Bristol Record Office) and Wilkinson and Simpson Ltd, manufacturing chemists of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1894–1975 (Tyne and Wear Archives).

Among hospital records it is gratifying to see that Cheshire Record Office acquired case records from Parkside Lunatic Asylum, Macclesfield, dating from the 1870s, that had to the present writer's knowledge been circulating on the open market. Also in the psychiatric area, records of Hellingly Hospital, formerly East Sussex County

Asylum, 1899–1983, were received by East Sussex Record Office. Other early patient records found their way into Greater Glasgow Health Board Archive (Gartloch Hospital, 1832–1995, Lennox Castle Hospital, 1906–91, and Glasgow Western Infirmary, 1902–70), and Hampshire Record Office (Yateley and Fleet Cottage Hospitals, 1898–1994).

Accessions of records of medical-related societies were as ever dominated by the collecting activities of the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre in the Wellcome Library: noteworthy acquisitions included records of the British Society of Immunology, c. 1950–99, the Coordinating Campaign for the Defence of the 1967 Abortion Act, c. 1970–99, and Population Concern, c. 1970–99.

Personal papers are predominantly the preserve of national, university and specialist repositories. Accessions of this type in 1999 ranged from the travel journals of John Davy MD, 1816–47 (Wellcome Library) to papers of W E Kershaw (1911–98), Professor of Parasitology (Liverpool University), and an account of service in Kenya by a colonial doctor, T H R Cashmore, 1953–63 (Cambridge University Library, Royal Commonwealth Society). By contrast, an interesting-sounding little group of midwives' papers were acquired by various local record offices: Norfolk Record Office (notebook of a Halvergate midwife, 1859–68, and register of cases of a Norwich midwife, 1936–7), Northumberland Record Office (records of A M Narey, midwife, 1933–68) and Sheffield Archives (papers of Olive Crossley, nurse and midwife, c. 1843–73). These acquisitions promise to help redress the imbalance in the historical record among the various medical professions. Patients sadly remain grossly under-represented in this record, except in their accustomed role

as the dumb victims of medical intervention.

Another area of medical experience that has been relatively neglected in the accessible archival record is that of veterinary medicine. This deficiency is currently being addressed by a Wellcome Trust-funded project by the Business Archives Council to compile a database of the records of British veterinary medicine (a successor to the earlier pharmaceutical database). Coincidentally, the Wellcome Library purchased a thirteenth-century copy of Giordano Ruffo's treatise on horse medicine at Sotheby's in June 1999, an early witness to the foundation text of European medieval veterinary medicine. At the other end of the date range, the Royal College of Surgeons acquired correspondence and papers of Lt-Col. E P Argyle (1875–1935), of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

In the context of concern about the implications of new data protection legislation and its effect on research using medical records, it is worth noting that the Medical Research Council issued new guidelines on personal information in medical research during the year, following consultation with researchers, professional and regulatory bodies, archivists, and patients' and consumer groups. The guidelines are available on the MRC's website (<http://www.mrc.ac.uk>).

New electronic resources of interest to historians of medicine become available at a steady rate. The Hospital Records Database, a joint project of the Wellcome Trust and Public Record Office, was mounted on the PRO's website (<http://hospitalrecords.pro.gov.uk>). This now provides remote access to a database of over 2,800 entries for UK hospitals, with information about the existence and location of their records; searches can be made either by hospital or town name. On a bigger scale, the British Library's manuscripts catalogue went on-line during 2000 (<http://molcat.bl.uk>). This provides remote access to the catalogue and index

entries in the printed catalogues of Additional Manuscripts up to 1995 (with minor exceptions), plus the catalogues of some of the Foundation and other collections, including the index to the Sloane manuscripts. Interestingly, the British Library continues to publish hard-copy printed catalogues as well as electronic ones, recognizing that the two versions are complementary rather than competing tools.

The year 2000 saw the publication of the *Catalogue of Western Manuscripts in the Wellcome Library, MSS.5120–6244*, compiled by Richard Palmer, formerly Curator of Western Manuscripts. Although only of modest size, this is an important publication as it marks the culmination of the great cataloguing process begun by S A J Moorat after the Second World War. Material continues to be added to the Wellcome collection, and indeed both Moorat's and Palmer's catalogues incorporate many entries for manuscripts acquired after Sir Henry Wellcome's death in 1936; but all the manuscript volumes collected by Wellcome himself—and which survived the later rationalizations by his Trustees—have now been brought to light. Wellcome's own papers, and the records of his multifarious non-business activities and the institutions they spawned, are now accessible via an electronic database, which saw increasing use during the year, although it is not yet available remotely. The year also saw publication of the 5th edition of the *Guide to the Contemporary Medical Archives Centre*, bringing up to date the overview of CMAC's collections with the addition of three hundred entries since the 4th edition in 1995. Publication of the *Catalogue* and the *Guide* closes a period of two decades during which the Wellcome Library maintained two archives departments, to the general bewilderment of the outside world; CMAC joined forces with the Western Manuscripts department during the course of the year, and it is hoped that users of the Wellcome collections will benefit from the introduction

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of common access procedures and finding aids. Descriptions of the Wellcome Library's archives and manuscripts will begin to be loaded into an automated system in 2001 to provide on-line access to the collections via a common interface with the main Wellcome Library Innopac system.

The Wellcome Library is naturally fortunate to receive generous funding for its various activities. Other libraries and archive repositories are not always so well

placed, and for this reason a joint Wellcome Trust–British Library scheme was established during the year to help preserve and improve access to medical-historical collections in the UK. A million pounds has been earmarked for distribution over two years to applicants seeking support for conservation and/or cataloguing projects. Details can be found on the Wellcome Trust's web site (<http://www.wellcome.ac.uk>).

The Jerry Stannard Memorial Award

The 2001 competition for the annual award in honour of the late Professor Jerry Stannard is open to graduate students and to recent recipients of a doctoral degree (the PhD degree or an equivalent), conferred not more than three years before the competition deadline. The purpose of the award is to encourage research by young scholars in the history of materia medica, medicinal botany, pharmacy, and folklore of drug therapy before the 1700s. Manuscripts must be in English, French or German. Only one paper by any author may be submitted in any given year. Each entry should be typewritten, double-spaced, and no longer than 50 pages, including notes, bibliography, and appendices. Entrants should keep copies of their manuscripts,

since manuscripts submitted will not be returned. Each manuscript must be accompanied by: (a) a one-page abstract of the paper *in English*; (b) a current curriculum vitae of the author; and (c) a letter of recommendation from an established scholar in the field. Entrants who are US residents should give their home address and social security number. Entries must be received no later than 15 February 2001. The award will be announced on or about 15 May 2001. All manuscripts and correspondence should be addressed to: The Stannard Award Committee, Attn: Professor Thomas J Lewin, Department of History, Wescoe Hall 3001, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045–2130, USA.

Call for Papers

International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences 33rd Annual Meeting, 21–24 June 2001

Cheiron: the International Society for the History of Behavioral and Social Sciences will hold its 33rd annual meeting 21–24 June 2001 at Indiana University, Bloomington (Bloomington, Indiana, USA). Programme submissions (symposia, papers, and posters) may deal with any aspect of the behavioral and social

sciences or with related historiographical or methodological issues. Submissions must be received by 15 January 2001. Travel awards are available to assist students who present papers or posters. For further information, contact Professor Marlene Shore, Cheiron Program Chair, Department of History, 2140 Vari Hall,

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Call for Papers

Symposium, XXI International Congress of History of Science Mexico City, 8–14 July 2001

A symposium on 'Science at the Frontiers: Medicine and Culture in the Ancient Medieval Worlds' will take place during the XXI International Congress of History of Science. The objective is to study the transfer of knowledge between cultures from Antiquity to the end of the Middle Ages. Given the link between medicine and culture, the Symposium will focus on the transformations occurring in the process of transfer and on the further adaptation of knowledge to new cultural parameters. The concept of medicine includes all the disciplines of the bio-medical field, from medicine *stricto sensu* to therapeutics, herbal medicine and, for

instance, iatro-mathematics. The cultures taken into consideration will range from the pre-Western (Greece, Rome, Late Antiquity, and the Arab World) and Western (from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance) to the Near- and Far-Eastern worlds. The papers should present an original methodological approach and, preferably, new data possibly from unedited and even unnoticed sources, together with a view of the current status of research. Scholars from all disciplines are invited to contribute. For proposals contact directly atouwaide@hotmail.com. For further information on the Congress, see the web site <http://www.smhct.org>.

Call for Papers

'Anatomy in the Eighteenth Century' International Abraham Vater Symposium Wittenberg, 15–17 November 2001

This conference, which will be held on the occasion of the 250th anniversary of Abraham Vater's death, will not only focus on the life and work of the Wittenberg anatomist, but will try to cover the whole range of anatomical thinking in the eighteenth-century. The following topics will be dealt with: anatomical research and discoveries; the impact of anatomy on medical education and on medical practice; new techniques of preparation; anatomical collections; anatomy in the social and economic context; dissemination

of anatomical knowledge in popular (medical and non-medical) literature. Proposals for contributions (English or German) and short abstracts should be submitted by 1 May 2001 to Karin Stukenbrock, MA, or Dr Jürgen Helm, Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Institut für Geschichte und Ethik der Medizin, D-06097 Halle (Saale), e-mail: juergen.helm@medizin.uni-Halle.de. For further information see <http://www.medicin.uni-halle.de/geschichtel/vater.html>.