

(*Wohllollen*) might bring down the wrath of God (*Zorn Gottes*), the object of trust (*Zuversicht*) as well as an actor in a universe (*Wirken Gottes*) filled with objects of wonderment (*Wunderbare*). One can find here information on theories of the welfare state (*Wohlfahrt*) and on the civil polity (*Zivilgesellschaft*), both valuable for pointing to differences between British, American and Continental attitudes. A substantial section is devoted to knowledge (*Wissenschaft*) and its cognates, and reminds us that an abundance of learning or science does not necessarily equate with wisdom (*Weisheit*), let alone with worldly wisdom (*Weltweisheit*). Logicians may deny this (*Widerspruchsfreiheit*).

The whole encyclopaedia is a resource for historians as well as philosophers, and should be on the shelves of every major library. Although aimed at a German-speaking audience, its entries range much wider, and show the insular just how varied many of the terms and concepts that we use today have been and are. The editors and the publishers deserve heartfelt thanks.

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**Jeffery Burley and Kristina Plenderleith**  
(eds), *A history of the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford: a biography of a building*, Oxford, Green College at the Radcliffe Observatory, 2005, pp. viii, 186, illus, £14.50, US\$28.00 (hardback 0-9509394). Orders to: The Development Office, Green College at the Radcliffe Observatory, Woodstock Road, Oxford OX2 6HG; e-mail: development.office@green.ox.ac.uk

The Radcliffe Observatory has been described by some as the finest eighteenth-century building in Oxford, and by Nikolaus Pevsner as architecturally the “finest observatory in Europe”. However, there is so much more to the Radcliffe Observatory than the architecture, and this book uses multiple authors and a

biographical approach to reveal a fascinating story.

There are three quite different occupations in the 225 years of the Observatory: firstly astronomy and meteorology, secondly medical research, and finally as the centrepiece of an Oxford college. In 1681 Christopher Wren, previously Savilian Professor of Astronomy, advised that an observatory need only be a “little house of boards 12 foot square and 7 foot high with a detachable roof”. Edmund Halley built such a structure in 1705.

When Thomas Hornsby became Professor of Astronomy he petitioned the Radcliffe Trustees for money to build an observatory, requesting that there should be a single storey building aligned on an east-west axis. In addition he asked for a large room for experimental philosophy above his residence and a third storey for refractory telescopes, which general plan of the Observatory we see today. Henry Keene produced plans and the foundation stone was laid in June 1772. But, after the ground floor had been built, Keene was replaced by James Wyatt. Wyatt’s design for the tower is magnificent. The top floor is based on the Tower of The Winds in Athens but with large windows. Beautiful sculptures of the eight winds encircle its top with Heracles and Atlas supporting a copper globe on the roof. These and the Coade stone signs of the zodiac greatly enhance the neo-classical appearance of the building. The allegorical figures are explained and beautifully illustrated before a chapter on the gardens and grounds leads naturally to a history of the Observers.

Thomas Hornsby started meteorological observations in 1774 and these are part of the longest continuous series of temperature and rainfall records from any one site in the British Isles. As a result, the chapter on meteorological observations makes interesting reading in view of recent controversy about climate change.

By 1928, light and atmospheric pollution was so bad that the Observatory moved to South Africa using funds from the sale of the building to Lord Nuffield, who then donated it to the hospital authorities.

There had been a little teaching of clinical medicine in Oxford before the 1930s but the

## Book Reviews

school included the Nuffield Institute of Medical Research housed in the Observatory. Initially the research was in x-ray cinematography and experimental therapeutics. There followed research into neonatal physiology but the inconvenience of a building with no lifts can be gauged by sheep having to be carried up the elliptical staircase. The Nuffield Institute moved to Headington in 1970 and various departments used the building until 1979 when Green College was founded.

The Regius Professor of Medicine, Sir Richard Doll conceived the idea of a postgraduate college mainly for medical tutors, scientists and students. Dr and Mrs Cecil Green endowed the college, which opened in 1979 with Sir Richard Doll as the first warden. The college expanded to include a wide range of disciplines in pure and applied subjects related to human health and welfare with the Observatory as its focal point.

The last chapter is a fascinating exposition of the range and the techniques used in the first part of the (expensive) conservation of the exterior of the Observatory. The book has numerous illustrations and references and is well worth reading as a series of interconnected short stories.

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**M J van Lieburg,** *The history of the Sophia Children's Hospital in Rotterdam*, transl. Ko Hagoort, Rotterdam, Erasmus Publishing, 2004, pp. 232, illus., €27.50 (hardback 90-5235-174-0).

This celebration of a much-loved Dutch institution is old-fashioned in concept and execution. Published to celebrate the integration of the hospital with the Medical Faculty and the University of Rotterdam Hospital, it is a revision and update of the author's history of the hospital, *Het Sophia Kinderziekenhuis 1863–1975*, published over thirty years ago.

The hospital's foundation represents the familiar story of the growth of children's

hospitals from the mid-nineteenth century: rapid expansion of urban population and stubborn high infant and child mortality rates causing concern among medical and philanthropic circles and the establishment of an institution specifically aimed at the urban child from the impoverished family. The story of the meteoric growth of this mercantile and industrial city, and the health penalty paid by its most vulnerable residents has been necessarily truncated to allow the continuation of the story of the Sophia Children's Hospital from 1975.

The construction of the work follows a familiar path, in that it is chronological, and there is a strong emphasis on the organizational structure, finances and buildings of the hospital. This children's hospital, like so many in North America, Britain and mainland Europe, had a constant struggle to stave off bankruptcy, and to justify its existence in a world where larger general hospitals were increasingly opening up children's departments. The thread of the hospital's difficult relationship with the local council is particularly intriguing, especially given that the hospital board boasted so many influential local business figures from its inception. Almost in spite of the council, a large new hospital was opened in 1937 (at virtually the same time as a similar building opened at Great Ormond Street in London), to give Rotterdam's children the opportunity to experience many of the recent developments in paediatric medicine.

The construction of the work is partly dictated by the lack of archival material, and results in the patients meriting just eight pages from the hospital's foundation until the middle of the Second World War. In many respects, the story of the hospital is more interesting post 1937, when the author (speaking from personal experience, private papers, and his own recollections of conversations with long-dead colleagues) deals with the development of the single institution into a centre for paediatric research and out-patient clinic-based childcare, involving the agreement and participation of patients and their families. Disappointing is the manner in which he covers what one might have expected to