

News, Notes, and Queries

DR SPITZNER'S ANATOMICAL MUSEUM

The "Grand Musée Anatomique et Ethnologique du Docteur Spitzner" is perhaps the only surviving example of what F. Parkes Weber (*Aspects of death*, 1922, p.739) called "modern 'popular' and often disgusting so-called anatomical museums" which toured Europe in the nineteenth century and gave the public a sensational picture of medicine and disease. Dr Pierre Spitzner, a showman with no doctoral qualification, opened the museum in Paris in 1856 with eighty anatomical waxes. It was subsequently enlarged with additional exquisite wax sculptures by French and Belgian artists and with preserved organs. The subjects included anatomy (especially of reproductive organs and foetus), heads and skulls illustrating racial types, freaks, skin diseases, general pathology, surgery, obstetrics and venereal diseases, all of which were treated so as to emphasize the horrific, the bizarre, and the simply extraordinary: a wax girl in a white gown, her ankles tied together, undergoing caesarian section by two male hands emerging from a pair of disembodied black sleeves; a decapitated head with congealed blood on its lips; a wax head of a man undergoing trephination; and a life-size superrealistic wax of the Tocci twins (two heads and chests but normal from the waist down). The section on venereal diseases is suitably repulsive and an effective 'Leçon d'hygiène' (the title of a watercolour by Félicien Rops, 1878/80, which shows a young conscript being shown round just such a museum: no. 127 in the Rops exhibition, Brussels – Paris – Nice 1985).

After the death of Pierre Spitzner's widow in 1939, the museum went into limbo, which explains why it is not mentioned in E.J. Pyke's *Biographical dictionary of wax modellers* (1973 and 1981). It was briefly revived in the 1970s but was finally sent to be dispersed by auction at the Nouveau Drouot, Paris, on 10 June 1985 (Me Hervé Chayette). An illustrated catalogue by M. Alain Weill described the collection in 225 lots. Fortunately, negotiations involving the auctioneer and the Ministry of Culture led to the announcement that the sale was pre-empted by the purchase of the entire museum by the pharmaceutical firm Roussel-Uclaf for a sum reported to be Fr.1,900,000 (*Le Figaro* 24 May 1985; *Le Quotidien* 19 June 1985). After being shown in a temporary exhibition at the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris in 1986, it is reported that the museum will be once again sent on tour, a prospect which will not commend itself to all museum-professionals.

THOMAS PHAER MD OF CILGERRAN (1510–60)

Thomas Phaer needs no introduction to medical historians, paediatricians, and all others interested in the care of children, who will surely be amazed to learn that he no longer has even the simplest memorial. Such as he had was cleared away during reconstruction work in the Parish Church of Cilgerran during the nineteenth century. His last will and testament drawn up on 12 August 1560 requests that he be buried there, with a marble stone upon his grave and "suche Scripture thereupon, graven in brasse, as shalbe devised by my frynd Mr. George fferers". The resting place of the Father of British Paediatrics at present lies unmarked. Together with Dr Emyr Wyn Jones, President of the History of Medicine Society of Wales, I have asked permission to erect a tablet of Welsh slate with gold lettering to honour his memory.

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IN MEMORIAM

THOMAS PHAER M.D.

OF CILGERRAN

1510–1560

AUTHOR OF THE FIRST WORK IN ENGLISH
ON CHILD CARE

‘TO DO THEM GOOD THAT HAVE MOST NEED,
THAT IS TO SAY, CHILDREN:

AND TO SHEW THE REMEDIES

THAT GOD HATH CREATED FOR THE USE OF MAN’.

The Book of Children

The Bishop of St David’s has indicated his active interest, and formal application has been made for the granting of a faculty. It is planned to unveil the tablet at a Children’s Service on Mothering Sunday, 16 March 1986. We feel there are many who would like to be associated with the restitution of a memorial to this great Tudor scholar and funds are being sought in the region of £500 for the cost and fixing of the tablet. Any surplus will be used to maintain the church fabric. Would you please make your cheques payable to The Thomas Phaer Fund, and send them to: Dr John Cule, High Sheriff of Dyfed, Abereinion, Capel Dewi, Llandysul, Dyfed SA44 4PP. Please indicate if you would like an invitation to attend the Ceremony of Unveiling, as numbers will have to be limited.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

Urs Boschung, MD, has been appointed to the chair of History of Medicine at the University of Berne, Switzerland, succeeding Prof. Esther Fischer-Homberger, MD. Prof. Boschung comes from the University of Zurich, where he had been appointed Privat-Dozent in 1982 and where he was the Keeper of the Medico-historical Museum, which is attached to the Institute of the History of Medicine. The new keeper is Christopher Mörgeli, lic.phil.

Professor John Scarborough, formerly historian of medicine and pharmacy at the University of Kentucky, has succeeded Prof. Glenn Sonnedecker of the University of Wisconsin-Madison as Director of the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy. In addition, Prof. Scarborough becomes historian of pharmacy on the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Professor John K. Crellin, pharmacist-historian at Duke University, has been selected by the American Institute of the History of Pharmacy as the second Fischelis Scholar. Prof. Crellin expects to present his findings in a monograph tentatively titled ‘Herbal medicine and pharmacy: perspectives on professional realities’.

SYMPOSIUM ON THE HISTORY OF IMMUNOLOGY

Toronto, 5–6 July 1986

The symposium will be held at Toronto on 5–6 July 1986 preceding the 6th Congress of the International Society for Immunology. It will bring together many of the outstanding immunologists of the generation that created modern immunology,

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and give them the opportunity to write their own intellectual history. The programme will cover all areas of immunology. It will lay the foundation for the history of a field which has up to now been almost untouched by historians of science and medicine. For further information on the programme, registration, and accommodation, please contact Dr Pauline M.H. Mazumdar, Hannah Professor of the History of Medicine, Victoria College, University of Toronto, 73 Queen's Park Crescent, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5S 1K7.

PENNSYLVANIA HOSPITAL LIBRARY

The Pennsylvania Hospital announces that its Historic Library is completely recatalogued and available for research. The collection, which totals 13,164 volumes (8,700 books and 4,464 bound journals), is the richest resource in early medicine belonging to any hospital in the United States. Many items are now scarce, but the library was not developed to be a rare book collection. Rather, the collection was assembled to meet the medical and scientific needs of the physicians and students of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a time when Philadelphia was recognized as the centre for medicine and science in America.

The library was begun in 1762 with a donation from Dr Fothergill, and grew with gifts and purchases. Medical journals and classic volumes were acquired, including volumes from the library of William Byrd of Westover (we believe we have one of the largest known extant collections); many volumes from the library of Dr Benjamin Smith Barton; and several incunabula. We have many items in Austin's *Early medical imprints*, and are included in the new *Eighteenth-century short title catalog* as well as the *National union catalog*. In 1847, the American Medical Association designated the library to be the first, largest, and most important medical library in the country. Two grants from the National Library of Medicine allowed for complete recataloguing (author, title, subject, date, and provenance).

COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS OF PHILADELPHIA

The Francis C. Wood Institute for the History of Medicine of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia announces its Rockefeller Foundation Humanities Residency Program for 1986–87. Two grants of \$25,000 each will be awarded to scholars who will spend one year in residence conducting research in the College library and participating in the Wood Institute seminar programme. Grants will not be made for doctoral research. For information and applications contact: Roselind Valentin, Wood Institute, 19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA.

The history of American internal medicine will be examined by an international group of physicians and historians at the Second Wood Institute Symposium. Rosemary Stevens and Paul Beeson will provide keynote addresses for the conference, which will be held at the College of Physicians of Philadelphia on March 21–22, 1986.

Contact Ros Valentin, Wood Institute, College of Physicians, 19 S. 22nd St., Philadelphia, PA 19103, USA.

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INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN THE COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF
MEDICINE — EAST AND WEST

The tenth symposium in this series was held at the Fuji Institute of Education and Training at Susono-shi, Shizuoka, Japan, from 8 to 15 September 1985. The theme discussed was 'The History of Therapy'. The speakers were: F. Fu (China Institute for the History of Medicine); C. Habrich (Deutsches Medizinhistorisches Museum, Ingolstadt); S. M. Haghi (Iran); H. Hiram and S. Ishino (Kitasato Institute, Tokyo); V. Nutton and J. H. Warner (Wellcome Institute, London); J. Parascandola (National Library of Medicine, Bethesda); S. Sakai (Department of Medical History, Juntendo University, Tokyo); C. Salomon-Bayet (Université de Lille).

SOCIETY FOR THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF MEDICINE

A series of seminars on 'The Popularization of Medical Knowledge' will be held at 5.00 p.m. at the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1 7HU. (Organizer: Dr Roy Porter, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London NW1 2BP.)

- 17 January Edward Yoxen (University of Manchester): 'Speaking about competition: James Watson's *The double helix* as popularization'
- 31 January Estelle Cohen (Portsmouth Polytechnic): 'The medical construction of gender and sexuality in England. c. 1700'
- 14 February Ginnie Smith (Wellcome Institute): 'Popular medical "knowledge": the case of cosmetics'
- 28 February Christine English (Wellcome Institute): 'The circulation of books: medical literature in early public libraries'
- 14 March Lesley Hall (Wellcome Institute): 'Married love or marital hygiene: medical and lay writers of sex advice, William Acton to Eustace Chesser, and their influence'.

11TH BRITISH HISTORY OF MEDICINE CONGRESS, 1986

This will be a joint meeting of the British and Scottish Societies of the History of Medicine and will be held in Edinburgh on 22–24 August 1986. The subject is 'Scotland's Historical Contribution to International Medicine'. Those interested in attending should contact Dr David Wright, Secretary, Scottish Society of the History of Medicine, Anaesthetic Department, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh EH4 2XU.

LINDSAY CLUB

The Lindsay Club exists to promote interest, study, and research in the history of dentistry, and bring together people sharing this interest. The Club will hold a meeting on 19 February 1986 at BDA Headquarters, 64 Wimpole Street, London W1, commencing at 5.30 p.m., when the pharmacist, Juanita Burnby, will present a paper entitled 'Common roots'. Visitors and prospective members are welcome to attend this meeting. Further information on the Lindsay Club may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary, Miss M. A. Clennett, 64 Wimpole Street, London W1M 8AL.