

# News, Notes, and Queries

## Medical Archives and Manuscripts News, 2004

Publication of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* in September 2004 provided among other things an opportunity to take stock of the rise to prominence of medicine and medical history during the twentieth century. Not only are medical figures both well-known and obscure generously scattered throughout the volumes, but the subject itself was promoted to equality with areas such as science and art and architecture, to judge by the editorial structure of the publication. Such equality would have been unthinkable a hundred years before. The rise of medical history has seen, and to a large extent been founded on, a concomitant growth of interest in and access to medical related archives. Some of these were always there, if largely untouched and unregarded; others have grown and developed in the century or so since the first *Dictionary of National Biography* was published. Inclusion of information on archival sources in the latest biographies, together with the ability to search the electronic text, produces some interesting results: the Wellcome Library, for instance, is cited as an archival source at the end of 589 entries, a modest score relative to the British Library's 9958, but comparable to the Imperial War Museum (580), and not far behind the National Maritime Museum (630). The older medical libraries score pretty highly (Royal College of Physicians, 217, Surgeons 111), reflecting the richness of these long-established collections for biographical research. Overall, such relatively high scores demonstrate the extent to which medical figures proliferate in the recent publication.

Most recent accessions to archive repositories would of course make no impact on these figures, both because the material is not primarily of biographical relevance and because even where it is the individuals concerned are not persons of note. The latest digest of accessions to repositories in the field of health and medicine compiled by the Historical Manuscripts

Commission (<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/accessions/2003/03digests/medic.htm>), which covers the year 2003, reveals remarkably few accessions of personal papers. Among local record offices, only four are noted, though they range from medical notes of Archdeacon John Palmer of Northampton, with the tantalizing covering dates c.1641–49 (Northamptonshire Record Office), to the diaries of an unidentified Warrington nurse, 1944–46 (Cheshire and Chester Archives). National, special and university repositories report a larger number of accessions of personal papers, with the Wellcome Library as ever especially prominent: of particular interest here are letters from C G Jung to his British colleague, H Godwin Baynes, 1936–43, and notebooks and correspondence of the biochemist Gerald Wyatt relating to DNA, 1949–55. Elsewhere the correspondence and papers of Lachlan Grant relating to socio-economic conditions and politics in the Highlands, 1902–45 (National Library of Scotland) point to the important role many doctors have had as social reformers, whilst the professional and literary papers of the psychiatrist Ken Morrice, c.1940–89 (Aberdeen University Library), and the research papers of the dramatherapist, director and actress Sue Emmy Jennings, 1975–99 (Exeter University Library) promise to shed further light on that growing area of interest, the interface between medicine and the arts. The papers of Raymond Lightwood, technician and researcher in the Department of Surgery, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham, relating to among other things the design and development of pacemaking equipment, 1959–78 (Birmingham University Library), remind us that archivists have on the whole been more successful in acquiring records of clinicians than technicians. At the same time, the papers of Anthony John Culyer, professor of economics at York, relating to the NHS Research and Development Task

Force, 1993–2001 (Borthwick Institute York), confirm that the work of professionals quite outside the medical field can often have great relevance for medical historians.

Turning from personal to institutional papers, a few entries stand out among the mass of hospital and health authority records. Leech accounts from Derby dispensary, 1819–24 (Derbyshire Record Office), and minutes, magazines and photographs of the hospital broadcasting service, Radio Driffield, 1972–2001 (East Riding of Yorkshire Archives) remind us that there is more to hospital life than merely nursing and ward visiting. As ever, hospital clinical records are pretty few and far between, the case files from Hellesdon hospital, c.1970–99 (Norfolk Record Office) being apparently the only accession of such material of recent date to a publicly accessible repository in 2003. The case records and journal from the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, 1821–24, reported by Edinburgh University Library, will no doubt add to the documentation available for the study of that fundamentally important institution for the history of medical education in Britain. The minutes of both the Nottingham Medico-Chirurgical Society, 1851–1996 (Nottingham University Library) and the York Medical Society, 1810–1994 (Borthwick Institute) sound promising research material for investigating the development of the medical profession in the provinces. Among many accessions of institutional archives to the Wellcome Library's collections, the records of the Chest, Heart and Stroke Association, c.1899–1989, reinforce that library's important holdings for the history of public health in twentieth-century Britain.

The drive to improve public access to medical manuscripts and archives continues to gather

momentum as part of the wider access agenda. During 2004 the Wellcome Trust agreed to fund the Research Resources in Medical History scheme for a further £1 million over two years, with a particular focus on the preservation and conservation of collections, on which all access ultimately depends. The quantity of catalogue data available on-line grows by the day as archive repositories and libraries automate their finding aids and network their catalogues; during 2004 for instance the Wellcome Library went live with the catalogues of the papers of Francis Crick (PP/CRI), of the neurologist MartheVogt (PP/MLV), and of the business correspondence of Sir Henry Wellcome (WF/E/01). Web-based gateways providing access to networked catalogue data of interest to medical historians included the Genesis database of collections for women's history (<http://www.genesis.ac.uk/>) and the Mundus gateway to missionary archives (<http://www.mundus.ac.uk/>). Provision of facsimiles of the documents themselves ranged in the Wellcome Library's case from the traditional (filming of 247 manuscript remedy books for the Primary Source Microfilm publication *Women and medicine: remedy books, 1533–1865*) to the more pioneering (scanning of some eight hundred images from the Crick papers for the National Library of Medicine's *Profiles in Science* website). The mounting of digital objects on the web will clearly be a future growth area for archivists, often in collaboration with external partners, to create virtual archives or subject-based research and study resources. Whether such developments will ever be either comprehensive or flexible enough to alter significantly the patterns of research by serious scholars remains to be seen, whatever the advantages they offer to more modest research projects.

## The Linnaeus Link Project

The Linnaeus Link Project is an international collaboration aimed at producing an online union catalogue of material relating to the eighteenth-century Swedish scientist Carl Linnaeus and his students. The Project is supported by a consortium of museums, archives, libraries and

other institutions in Europe and the United States, led by the Natural History Museum in London (NHM).

The Project is indebted to the Linnean Society of London, which is providing funding for two years from January 2004. This will

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enable the cataloguing of the extensive Linnaean collection at the NHM, which will form the initial core of the union catalogue, and the technical implementation of the catalogue.

Once this core catalogue is established, libraries around the world will be able to add their holdings information to the records, providing researchers with a vast warehouse of resources on Linnaeus and his times.

In addition, an ongoing survey of holdings of Linnaean material worldwide is being conducted. Summary survey results and the survey form can be found on the Project website. Libraries with Linnaean material are encouraged to complete the survey form so that their records can be added to the union catalogue.

Further information and a list of the Project partners is available on the Project website at <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/library/linn/>.

### **Jerry Stannard Memorial Award**

The 2005 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 (PhD or an equivalent), conferred not more than five years before the competition deadline. The purpose of the award is to encourage research by young scholars in the pre-1700 history of materia medica, medicinal botany, pharmacy, folklore of

drug therapy, and the bibliography of these areas. In 2005 the award will be \$1000. Submissions should be received no later than 15 February 2005. For further information, please contact: The Stannard Award Committee, Attn: Professor Victor Bailey, Department of History, University of Kansas, Wescoe Hall, 1445 Jayhawk Blvd. Room 3001, Lawrence, KS 66045-7590, USA.