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Society for the Social History of Medicine

The Gazette

No 46, December 2008

ISSN 0962-7839

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**CONFERENCE REPORT**

‘Experimental Transactions: Science and the Human Animal Boundary’,

Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease, Durham University, 24 June 2008.

On Tuesday 24 June 2008, an interdisciplinary audience gathered for the fifth Workshop of the Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease on “Experimental Transactions: Science and the Human-Animal Boundary.” The one-day workshop, organised by Stephanie Eichberg, offered an interesting array of papers, with subjects ranging from the mid-17th century to contemporary issues. The main focus was on the problem of the human-animal-analogy in science and an emphasis on the historical and institutional contextualisation of the laboratory animal. The workshop was held at the Wolfson Research Institute, Queens Campus, Stockton-on-Tees, and was sponsored by the Welcome Trust.

The first talk was given by Massimo Petrozzi (Johns Hopkins University) on “Inside and Outside the Laboratory: Animals, Humans and Blood Transfusion, 1666-1668.” He addressed the changing perceptions of animals by experimental scientists during the 17th-century, such as Robert Boyle, by focussing on how experimental results were informed by the animals’ natural behaviour outside the laboratory. Drawing on a wide range of examples, Petrozzi argued that, for a thorough understanding of animal experimentation at that time, it is vital to examine the relationship between the experimenter and his animal-subject inside and outside the laboratory.

In the second paper, “Constituting the Human via the Animal: Albrecht von Haller’s (1708-1777) ‘Sensibility’ Trials,” Stephanie Eichberg (Durham University) discussed the dual nature of Haller’s concept of animal ‘sensibility’ vs. human ‘sensation’. She showed that concepts associated with the functions of the nervous system remained flexible in Haller’s research just as much as the handling of the species boundaries during the experiment. It was instance for Haller’s theoretical understanding of human sensation influenced by a contemporary belief in the soul as the prime agent of bodily functions, whereas in the ‘souless’ animal sensibility could only be assessed by measuring bodily pain.

The next speaker, Frank-Walter Stahnisch (University of Calgary) talked about “19th Century French Physiology and the Conception of the Human-Animal Analogy: The Case of François Magendie (1783-1855) and Claude Bernard (1813-1878).” He suggested that matters of locality and practicality as well as the context-dependent choice of the ‘right’ animal had an important influence on the production of physiological knowledge. Depending on the experimenter’s research conditions, Stahnisch demonstrated that the human-animal relationship was equally variable.

How this relationship had changed in the 20th-century was the basis for Robert Kirk’s (University of Manchester) paper on “A Chance Observation: Ethological Approaches to Laboratory Animals and Human Health c. 1945-1969.” Based on the publications of pharmacologist Michael Robin Alexander Chance, Kirk showed how ethological considerations and the individual relationship between experimenter and lab animal restored the status of the laboratory animal as an agent mediating knowledge, and as an individual being. The result was the recovery of a more relational understanding of the animal both in the context of the laboratory as well as in relation to the experimenter.

How far an individual behavioural analysis of laboratory animals went was demonstrated by Edmund Ramsden’s (University of Exeter, London School of Economics) presentation “Experimental Methods in The Centre was involved in the Open House weekend in London in September when over 400 people visited the School’s Art deco interior through a series of guided tours. Its public health walks have continued to be popular with a special summer walk, led by our medical Blue Badge guide, Dr Ros Stanwell Smith and designed to celebrate the International Year of Sanitation.

Virginia Berridge
LSHTM

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Soldatenfriedhof in der Marchettigasse in Wien

Volume 4 of the series Monografien der Stadtarchaeologie Wien published by Phoibos, Vienna. 163 pg, 38 Euros.

During construction work in the 6th district of Vienna in 2005, parts of an 18th century military graveyard were discovered. Of the 393 skeletons unearthed in the course of the following salvage excavation, a sample of 58 skeletons was chosen for further anthropological investigation. According to death records, which showed that the soldiers mostly came from the lowest ranks.

The evalutation of the health status of the soldiers is based on the occurrence of cribra orbitalia and porotic hyperostosis, peristallo reactions in the cranial and postcranial remains, dental pathologies and trauma. High frequencies in all parameters point to high levels of pathogen exposure and poor living conditions of low status soldiers of the Austrian Army in the late 18th century. The osteological findings could be supplemented by written accounts of daily life in Vienna, as well as medical literature of the 18th century, which very well support the results.

Virginia Berridge
LSHTM

**ROY PORTER STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION**

The Society for the Social History of Medicine (SSHM) invites submissions to its 2008 Roy Porter Student Essay Prize Competition. This prize will be awarded to the best original, unpublished essay in the social history of medicine submitted to the competition as judged by the SSHM’s assessment panel. It is named in honour of the late Professor Roy Porter, a great teacher and a generous scholar.

The competition is open to undergraduate and post-graduate students in full or part-time education. The winner will be awarded £500.00, and his or her entry may also be published in the journal, Social History of Medicine.

The deadline for entries is: 2 February 2009

Any questions about the competition should be directed to:

Dr Lutz Sauerteig
Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease
Durham University
Queen’s Campus
Wolfson Research Institute
University Boulevard
Stockton on Tees TS17 6BH
United Kingdom.

Email: competition@sshm.org
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The final discussion picked up some of the major issues raised in the workshop. One vital and important question dealt... of the ‘laboratory animal’: from when on it would be prudent to speak of laboratory science proper? It was agreed that
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conceptions of the human-animal
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and animal rights campaigners provided an
from (anonymous) interviews with scientists
allegedly represented public opinion. Sections
questions in interviews or questionnaires
experimentation. She showed how different
in Science.” Pru Hobson-West (University of
20
Social and Behavioural Psychology: Travelling Facts in Human and Animal Experiments in Overcrowding.” Referring to
animal ecologist John B. Calhoun, Ramsden showed how knowledge about... to an evaluation of urban settlements and human society. Calhoun’s research thus crossed not only species boundaries but
disciplinary boundaries, and had an impact on social scientists and environmental psychologists during the second half of the
20th-century.
The last paper focused on “Contemporary Debates in the UK about the Use of Animals in Science.” Pru Hobson-West (University of Nottingham) reviewed quantitative and qualitative data from surveys assessing the public opinion regarding animal experimentation. She showed how different questions in interviews or questionnaires could change the outcome of polls that allegedly represented public opinion. Sections from (anonymous) interviews with scientists and animal rights campaigners provided an interesting insight in the different conceptions of the human-animal relationship and how this featured in contemporary discussions.
The final discussion picked up some of the major issues raised in the workshop. One vital and important question dealt with the concept of the ‘laboratory animal’: from when on it would be prudent to speak of laboratory science proper? It was agreed that the notion of ‘laboratory animal’ was tied to the phenomenon of the 19th-century rise of science, though the conceptual changes regarding its status can be traced back to the late 17th-century.
Another important point discussed the need for interdisciplinary studies on the subject. The historical issues raised in this workshop are highly relevant in informing the questions asked in a number of different disciplines, such as matters of standardisation and the laboratory as a space generating a special kind of knowledge. Likewise can approaches from other disciplines be essential for gaining a better understanding of the changing conceptions of the human-animal boundary in the history of science.
This well-organised workshop addressed a wide range of relevant topics in the history of animal experimentation and fostered lively discussions. The diverse backgrounds of the audience from various parts of the academic spectrum added much to the day’s value.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Medical Humanities: a call for contributions
The BMJ journal, Medical Humanities, aims to be a leading international journal that reflects the whole field of medical humanities, with high quality articles relevant to humanities and arts scholars, social scientists and policy-makers, medical educators, healthcare professionals, and patients.

Medical Humanities aims to inform a more nuanced appreciation of the context within which illness is experienced and healthcare delivered: not just the human context but also the historical, cultural, political and economic context. To help us to achieve this aim we welcome submissions from – amongst others – historians, anthropologists, philosophers, and economists. By bringing together this body of scholarly work, the journal aims to inform public and professional discourse about the nature and goals of medicine, the neutrality of biomedical knowledge, the inter-subjective nature of the clinical encounter, and the importance of considering the long view when dealing with the challenges of the here and now.

We welcome original papers from any part of the world, from all relevant approaches, including interesting empirical studies. Papers should be written in a non-specialist language and should ideally be readable by any well-informed individual, in particular by both healthcare professionals without specific expertise in the humanities, arts or social sciences and by scholars in the humanities, arts or social sciences with no practical healthcare experience.

For our part, The Editors will:
1. Ensure that all important issues in medical humanities are welcome in the journal.
2. Ensure that a fair, independent peer review system is in place.
3. Adhere to the highest ethical standards concerning editorial and research conduct.

To submit your paper, please go to http://submit-mh.bmj.com/. If you have any queries or require assistance, please contact the Editorial Office (email: mh@bmjgroup.com; tel: 00 44 (0)207 383 6139).

ANNOUNCEMENTS

News from the Centre for History in Public Health, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
The Centre’s NHS 60th anniversary activities are this November with a series of events looking at NHS management and organized by Martin Gorsky. A witness seminar on the Griffiths report bringing together some of the participants and the first ‘new managers’ in the NHS, will be followed by a one day conference on the history of management and by the annual history lecture, given by Rudolf Klein. Earlier in the year Virginia Berridge gave a Gresham lecture on the origins of the NHS which led to various spin offs, including an historical contribution in the British Medical Journal to the debate on NHS polyclinics.

Alex Mold's book on the history of the treatment of heroin addiction in the UK has just been published. The Centre has been profiled with papers by Alex Mold, Sue Taylor, Rachel Herring, Virginia Berridge and Richard Knowlton in the journal Drugs Education Prevention and Policy.

A pilot project working with Polish colleagues on the history of the Polish public health poster has been running through the year and has led to visits to Krakow and to Warsaw.

CONFERENCE REPORT

It’s About Time: Temporality and Interdisciplinary Research

You know you’ve chosen a good conference when your mother asks if she can come too. Miami was the location of this year’s annual meeting of the Social Science History Association. This event is in many respects unlike its European cousin, most of the audience from various parts of the academic spectrum added much to the day’s value.

Daniel Becker
Department of Philosophy & Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease, Durham University
Nonetheless, the health network offered a varied and interesting range of papers from an international range of speakers engaged in research on the modern period. A number of sessions focused upon epidemic disease, including responses to cholera, influenza and yellow fever, mostly in the North American context. Almost as numerous were the papers that considered mortality in a socio-economic or demographic way, in Spain, Sweden and the United States. Several papers tackled policy issues, including work on disability, HIV/AIDS, and welfare in Europe and North America. A range of other subjects was considered, including the demographics of aging, childhood, and mental health.

Alongside a packed schedule of scholarly panels, network meetings, and receptions, delegates had a chance to join organised tours of Little Havana and the Art Deco treasures of Miami Beach in order to experience the colourful city that lay outside the hotel. The organisers are to be commended for the slick running of such a large conference. Alongside the usual and substantial logistical considerations of an event this size, given that late October constituted the end of the sub-tropical hurricane season the SSHM's Executive Committee had for the first time to formulate a hurricane contingency plan. I'm sure I can speak for all participants in saying how grateful we were that those well-considered plans did not have to be implemented.

You will have to forgive me if the finer details of the conference are a little sketchy in this report. The early weeks of the first academic semester are always a busy time so I have much to catch up with, and as I said, the venue was Miami.

What I can say with confidence is that the 2009 annual Social Science History Association conference will be held 12-15 November, 2009 at Long Beach, California, on board a boat no less. The call for papers will soon be available on the association's webpage, www.ssha.org. The health/medicine/body network warmly welcomes the submission of both whole sessions and individual papers. If you have any suggestions or questions, you are invited to contact the network co-chairs, Lucinda Beier lmbeier@ilstu.edu and Marie Nelson marte@isak.liu.se.

Gayle Davis
University of Edinburgh

CONFERENCE REPORT

Medicine and the Workhouse

Birmingham Medical Institute
31 October - 1 November 2008

On the 31 October approximately 30 scholars working on aspects of medicine and the poor law attended a conference designed to explore a neglected aspect of Poor Law history. The two-day event, hosted by the Department of Modern History and the Centre for the History of Medicine at the University of Birmingham, and sponsored by the Wellcome Trust, was held at the Birmingham Medical Institute in Edgbaston, Birmingham. The conference involved 14 scholars from the United Kingdom and North America presenting on various aspects broadly connected with medicine in the workhouse. Seven papers addressed the Old Poor Law and took place on the first day of the conference. In addition to two ‘summing up’ papers, another eight were presented on the second day, which closed with a productive roundtable discussion.

The conference commenced with a position paper by Steve King (Oxford Brookes) which both surveyed the field and outlined the work that remains to be done in this area. In general, it was suggested that we know more about medicine under the New Poor Law than the Old, but great variety of practice has already been indicated by existing research.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Hospitals and Communities

International Network for the History of Hospitals, 5th International Conference,
Department of the History of Science, Institución Milà i Fontanals, CSIC.
Barcelona, Spain, 1-4 April, 2009.

The fifth international conference of the INHH is inspired by the success of our previous meetings in Norwich, Verona, Montreal and London. As in the past, our aim is to address new issues and themes in the history of hospitals within a wider social context. Indeed, all sessions will examine the impact of hospitals upon the nature and role of different communities and the ways in which hospitals were affected by the various agencies they served. Given the location of the conference, one of the underlying themes will be hospitals in the Mediterranean from the early middle ages onwards. However, since we also wish to encourage a broad comparative approach, we have included papers on North America, the West Indies, Russia and northern Europe. One session will investigate and discuss the important role of IT in writing and disseminating the history of hospitals through the ages.

The programme is available at: http://www.uea.ac.uk/ih/hnh

Teresa Huguet-Termes
Barcelona

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Medicine and Healthcare: History and Context

SSHM Postgraduate Conference
University College Dublin, 16-18 April, 2009.

The aim of the SSHM postgraduate conference is to draw together students from established Wellcome Trust Centres and also attract students studying the history of medicine within different academic environments. To this end, papers will contextualize the history of medicine and healthcare in political, military and policy history, economic and social history, local, national and global history, and the history of work and professionalisation.

Students can apply for bursaries to attend. General enquiries about the conference can be directed to Catherine Cox or Rosemary Wall at ngconf@sshm.org.

Society for the Social History of Medicine in association with the Centre for the History of Medicine in Ireland, University College Dublin/University of Ulster

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

"Knowledge, Ethics and Representations of Medicine and Health: Historical Perspectives"

Society for the Social History of Medicine, Annual Conference, 8-11 July 2010, Durham University

Organised by the Northern Centre for the History of Medicine and jointly hosted by Durham and Newcastle Universities.

Formal call for papers will follow in early 2009. For initial enquiries please email: enquiries@nchm.ac.uk

http://www.nchm.ac.uk/SSHM.html
Following lunch, events resumed with a presentation by Paul Carter (National Archives) on the Poor Law correspondence papers contained in the MH 12 collection at the National Archives. The resource, which includes approximately 20 million pages of correspondence between Poor Law officers and their constituencies, is currently being digitalised by Carter and his team at the archives with the assistance of local history societies, who will list the materials. The project will initially commence with the digital capture of 100 volumes from 22 unions evenly distributed throughout England and Wales. In order to demonstrate the richness of the collection, Carter explored the issue of medical neglect and workhouse care. More information about the project can be found at: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/partner_projects/workhouse/default.htm.

Though a familiar subject to historians, workhouse scandals were explored in an innovative way by Samantha Shave, a third-year PhD student at Southampton, in the following paper. Often described as unusual events, workhouse scandals according to Shave occurred far more often than many sources suggest. In her work, Shave is interested to move beyond the scandal and examine the way in which issues of neglect, for example, reach the national level of knowledge. In order to do this, Shave examined the Bridgewater Union scandal which erupted when more than a third of the poor residing in the Somerset Union’s workhouse died in the winter of 1836-7. Events escalated when John Bowen, a ‘violent Tory’ spoke out and eventually led to the issuing of a General Medical Order in 1842, the only such order issued by the Poor law commissioners. The paper explored feedback mechanisms in workhouse scandals according to many of the themes discussed in an earlier paper on Birmingham, but contrasted in long periods of service by the workhouse medical officers. Comprising workhouse, school and infirmary, the late nineteenth-century institution appears to have offered patients an environment conducive to recovery, and medical officers occasionally implemented the latest medical care into treatment. This included the early adoption of skin-grafting techniques in order to cure many chronic cases, especially those afflicted with skin ulcers.

The conference concluded with a discussion led by Joanna Innes (Oxford), who identified many of the common themes to come out of the presentations over the preceding two days and identified a number of areas that seemed to require further research. In general, the contrast between the two days of the conference were already becoming recognisable, the papers on the Old Poor law having largely concentrated on London, while those of the second day focused more explicitly on the provinces. Areas for further study included the architecture of the workhouse, comparative studies with other workhouses, and even other institutions, including prisons and asylums. She also highlighted neglected constituencies, not least soldiers and sailors, as well as a need to explore the reasons for change in the medical role of workhouses and its determinants. Nevertheless, the conference demonstrated that much work is already being undertaken in this area, and offered an opportunity for these scholars, many meeting for the first time, explore a fertile field for further inquiry and set future research agendas.

Jonathan Reinartz
University of Birmingham

Even the definition of a workhouse needs consideration, as many provincial institutions are referred to by a variety of names – almshouse, workhouse, poor house, house of industry - over their periods of existence. Among the many fruitful topics that deserve greater attention were doctors’ contracts, pauper narratives, finance and madness. The great need for additional detailed micro-studies was also indicated.

The ordinary session commenced with a paper by Kevin Siena (Trent University, Canada) which discussed the ways in which contagion and exclusion shaped policy at a number of workhouses in London. At the heart of the study was St Margaret’s, Westminster and the rapidity with which the institution became medicalised during the eighteenth century was conveyed. Also evident was that the workhouse and the spaces surrounding it quickly became blighted environments, not simply due to the cases housed and treated there, but as a result of their location near cemeteries, as well as the number of post-mortems conducted in-house.

A number of these issues were echoed in the following paper by Jeremy Boulton (University of Newcastle) and Leonard Schwarz (University of Birmingham). Based on a reconstruction of the admission and discharge records for the St Martin’s-in-the-Fields workhouse, supplemented by the parish’s settlement records, the paper indicated a number of trends in diagnoses and deaths in the life-cycles of paupers during the eighteenth century. As in the Siena’s paper, the workhouse appeared to be a hotbed of fevers and was responsible for 15-20% of total burials in the parish. Unlike St Margaret’s, the Guardians of the parish appeared to have been slower to medicalise the workhouse, but not significantly.

Alannah Tomkins (Keele University) offered a qualitative study in her paper which attempted to reconstruct the lives of pauper lives and the experience of workhouse care under the Old Poor Law as described in autobiographies. The five working-class narratives at the centre of the paper recounted workhouse life as early as the 1760s and were either neutral or upbeat on the subject of medical care. While this inspired a theoretical discussion on using autobiographies as a source, it was suggested that outside pressures on families were often worse than those found in the workhouse, occasionally leading paupers to refer to the workhouse as ‘home’.

In a paper entitled ‘Hygiene and Humanitarianism in the Eighteenth-Century Workhouse’, Susannah Ottaway (Carleton College, USA) revisited her research on the workhouse and old age. Framing her paper with a discussion of Locke’s Two Treatises of Civil Government, she considered the wider rights of the aged in their communities during the century and the greater emphasis that sources appeared to place on the old as a category. Ottaway’s paper led into a paper by Samantha Williams (University of Cambridge) which explored the workhouse’s relationship with another inmate group, unmarried mothers. Addressing the work of Tim Hitchcock, which showed that which unmarried mothers used the workhouse, St Luke’s, Chelsea specifically. Between 1743 and 1799, 155 deliveries were recorded in the workhouse. Though most mothers stayed three weeks to one month at the institution, a third arrived on the day they delivered. Some children remained after mothers departed the workhouse, but fewer than Williams expected. As many did expect, many children died (approximately a third) and actual medical care was much harder to recover in the sources.

The final two papers of the day dealt with the subject of children in the workhouse. The first, by Alysa Levene (Oxford Brookes University), discussed medical care for children in metropolitan workhouses. Forming a third of workhouse inmates, children suffered particularly high mortality rates at all workhouses during the eighteenth
enough to travel, but were then sent to other centres and institutions for treatment, including the home. Chris Upton (Newman College, Birmingham) indicated similar patterns in his exploration of the Asylum for the Infant Poor in Birmingham. Built in 1797, the Asylum was intended to remove children between the ages of 2 and 16 from the adult population housed at the town's main workhouse. Soon after construction, in 1798, it contained 300 children, mainly bastards and orphans, but also the children of prisoners, among other identifiable groups. Having put many of the children to work, the institution quickly became self-supporting, many of the children making pins, among other local products. By the 1830s, however, the balance between work and exercise noticeably changed, but the need to separate children from adults continued to occupy the guardians into the New Poor Law era, which witnessed other innovations intended to keep children out of the workhouse proper.

In a summary of the day’s events, Katrina Honeyman (University of Leeds) commented on the richness of the material and collated a number of the day’s themes, which were presented for discussion. These included the connections between the workhouse and the wider medical marketplace, the workhouse’s growing specialised function and the wide range of ailments recorded among workhouse inmates. That said, other themes were yet to emerge, including the teaching role of the workhouse, gender, the role of family, as well as agency, and the need to explore the voices of the poor in greater detail. After a fruitful discussion on these and various other subjects, the delegates retired for the day, many staying in Birmingham to enjoy an Indian feast at the Blue Mango restaurant in town.

The second day of the conference focused on the New Poor Law and commenced with a paper by Graham Mooney (Johns Hopkins University, USA) which considered the workhouse as a diagnostic space. Drawing on a database recording nearly 14,000 deaths in London during August and October 1866, Mooney drew out those deaths which occurred in the workhouse and compared these with deaths that took place in voluntary institutions and private homes. In contrast with the latter two, workhouse deaths were far more likely to be the result of a single cause. They were also least likely to be accompanied with a specified duration of sickness, as was common with deaths occurring in the home. This and a number of other factors led to a consideration of the role of nurses and doctors in medical care at the workhouse, as well as the act of registration. It also allowed for an exploration of a number of other institutionally-specific reasons for the different statistical patterns established.

The second of the morning’s session commenced with a paper by Virginia Crossman (Oxford Brookes University). Developing her work on the Irish Poor Law, Crossman provided an overview of the medical side of workhouses in Ireland, institutions which appeared to have been neglected when compared with even dispensaries. Concentrating on a few regions, the paper traced patterns of admission to infirmaries and demonstrated a rise in sick admissions among approximately 17-18,000 people who entered Irish workhouses annually between the 1860s and 1920s. Other patterns noted were the greater use of workhouses by Presbyterians.

Regional dimensions of workhouse development and use were further explored in the next paper by Jonathan Reinarz and Alistair Ritch (University of Birmingham). Concentrating on Birmingham, this paper was one of many micro-studies which aimed to uncover the workings of the workhouse infirmary on a local level. Built in 1733, the Birmingham workhouse was compared with the local General Hospital and the former’s status appeared for a time to be increased by its educational functions. Interest in the institution among local practitioners also peaked soon after reconstruction in 1852 and 1889, but its own medical staff appeared to serve one average for only three years in the second half of the nineteenth century. Despite some interest and innovations in medical practice, the workhouse officially affiliated to the local medical school as late as 1921. The second half of the paper explored the medical officers and patients of the institution, including children, venereal cases, epileptics and the aged. This was followed by a paper by Rebeca Wynter (University of Birmingham) who examined the workings of another Midlands workhouse, that in Stafford in the three decades to 1920. Concentrating on nursing care and the resident insane, Wynter charted the decision of the Guardians of the Stafford Union to specialise in the treatment of mental defectives. The paper also highlighted the slow growth of nursing care and considered the relationship between government and developments in workhouse medicine in the provinces.

The session finished with a paper by Len Smith (University of Birmingham) who described in broad terms the management of the insane at several midland workhouses, a subject that was introduced as a neglected area in the mixed economy of care for the mad. Drawing on a wealth of material, Smith’s study described the way in which workhouses in the nineteenth century were progressively transformed into clearing stations for the mentally disordered. While 25 per cent of those deemed mentally ill were in workhouses over the period, asylums appeared more often to cater for the acute mentally ill and workhouses took in ever greater numbers of congenital and chronic cases, many of whom were cared for by other inmates.