

# Gazette

## 20

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### EDITORIAL

It is a year since the I agreed to take over editing the Gazette and issue 20 is the third issue to come out from Liverpool. I have really enjoyed this year. My pigeon hole and email are much more exciting than before, and its' really nice to find out what is going on in the outside world almost by default. Thanks to all those who have sent material, notices of meetings and reports. Please keep the copy coming in.

This is the last edition of the Gazette before the Annual General Meeting held as usual at the Annual Conference which takes place this year in Liverpool from the 4th to 7th September. An agenda appears below. Please attend in person if you can (it is not necessary to attend the conference, although the organisers would like to see as many of you there as possible!).

In this issue Akihito Suzuki's leading article discusses the history of medicine in Japan. News and views from overseas are particularly welcome. We all benefit from knowing about developments in the progress of the social history of medicine elsewhere, particularly as Dr Suzuki points out we are frequently limited by our linguistic abilities. Our overseas members secretary Cornelia Osborne and the editor would welcome other submissions of this kind. Longer pieces could possibly be included in the SHM. News of new teaching initiatives as well as research work would be of interest to many members.

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Correspondence about the content and circulation of the Gazette and material for inclusion should be sent to the editor, Helen Power, Department of Economic and Social history, University of Liverpool, 11 Abercromby Square, Liverpool, L69 3BX. Tel: 0151 794 2410. Fax: 0151 794 2423. Email: hel@liv.ac.uk

## INFORMATION

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(Overseas members with news and views should contact Dr Cornelia Osborne).

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## Society News

### ELECTION REPORT FOR THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 1997.

Five nominations were received for the three vacancies on the Executive Committee. A postal ballot was organized in accordance with the constitution and a ballot paper was included in the April 1997 issue of the Gazette, together with a short biographical note for each candidate. When the election closed on 20 June 1997, 15 ballot papers had been received. The following candidates were elected to serve for three years until the Annual General Meeting in 2000: Edward Higgs, Oonagh Walsh and Joseph Melling.

In view of the low turnout, the Executive Committee decided at its meeting on 20 June 1997 to co-opt the two candidates who were not elected. Therefore, Stuart Anderson and David Cantor will also be invited to join the Committee. Alternative methods for balloting members will be discussed at the Annual General Meeting in early September and at the next Executive Committee. Written comments are welcome, especially from those who are not attending the AGM.

Anne Borsay, Honorary Secretary.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1997

The AGM of the Society for the Social History of Medicine will take place at 6.30pm on Friday 5 September 1997 at the Atlantic Tower Hotel, Chapel Street, Liverpool, L3 9RE (tel 0151-227-4444). All members are welcome, whether they attend the conference or not, and the meeting room will be signposted. Draft Agenda: 1. Apologies; 2. Minutes of Last AGM; 3. Matters arising from the Minutes; 4. Annual Report; 5. Report of the Journal Editors; 6. Treasurer's Report; 7. Services for Overseas Members; 8. Elections to the Executive Committee; 9. Prize Essay Competition; 10. AOB.

### Leading Article: HISTORY OF MEDICINE IN JAPAN

At the beginning of *The Book of Ancient Events*, one of the first mythical and epic chronicles of the early Japan, we are told that Izanagi the God and Izanami the Goddess had sex in order to give birth to islands. Since the Goddess reached orgasm first (for which she was reproached by the God), her first two babies were malformed, premature, or diseased. Only after the freaks were discarded, fit children / islands started to be born, which were to become healthy Japan. Like many other creation myths, the beginning of Japan is represented in terms of the contrast between purity and impurity, good behaviour and bad one, and health and disease.

The Book and other early mythical / historical texts contain numerous bits and pieces of observations and rules about health, disease, body, and medicine, which constitute the earliest medical writings in Japan. Incorporated into Shintoism (which lays strong emphasis on purity) and mixed freely with Chinese and Buddhist medicine, many of these medical precepts took firm roots in the realm of day-to-day medical and hygienic practice. Enviously rich historical records have survived, which point towards diverse problematics of historical and contemporary Japan. Historians and scholars from other disciplines have been conducting vigorous research into them, which have been accelerated in these ten years or so. Particularly noteworthy is the initiative and inspiration that have come from folklorists (something comparable to the influence of anthropology on historical scholarship in English-speaking countries as well as in France), who have shed light on fascinating, astonishing and occasionally disturbing details of popular medical belief and practice.

Early "high" medical science, largely framed within Chinese Natural Philosophy, have been studied extensively. Nowadays scholars are able to rely on carefully edited important early medical texts, provided with meticulous scholarly apparatus, beautifully bound and exorbitantly priced. Yu Fujikawa, one of the leading scholars that delved into the field, has left the collected works consisting of ten thick volumes with densely packed information and insight. Carrying the philological tradition with new and sophisticated theoretical awareness, an English work by Shigehisa Kuriyama (from Zone Books) investigates the notions of the body and its physiological regulation in the ancient Eastern and Far Eastern medicine.

Around the eighteenth century, Western medicine was introduced through contact with the Dutch and had co-existed peacefully with other traditional schools until the Meiji Revolution in the late nineteenth century. Perhaps the most fruitful research into the pre-Meiji reception of Western medicine has been done by using the model of intellectual acculturation, focusing on the conceptual translation of fundamental ideas such as the body, substance, disease and so on. Here, the recently published English work of Togo Tsukahara (from Reidel) shows how an early-nineteenth-century Japanese doctor reconciled Western and Chinese concepts of medicine and chemistry. With the Meiji Revolution, the new government decided that they should westernize medicine in Japan, e.g. establishing universities, building hospitals (which became the target of intense fear of the local population), setting up laboratories, introducing licensing system for medical practice, and so on. Their effort quickly bore fruit, and important discoveries were made by Japanese (although trained abroad) bacteriologists. Figures of international eminence and colourful characters such as Shibusaburo Kitazato (1852-1931), and Hideyo Noguchi (1876-1928) have become subjects of well-researched and well-balanced biography. Increasingly departing from the early unmitigated hagiographies, the lives of these figures are now increasingly seen in the light of the politics over the modernization of Japanese medical provision and the struggle for the dominion of medical research (Kitazato) and medico-scientific research achievement as the mean to break through the obstructive class and regional barriers (Noguchi).

Medical research and policy during and after the Second World War have been studied with highly provocative and occasionally shocking results. By far the most important discovery in recent years is the uncovering of the Japanese Army's extensive experiment on Chinese prisoners of war (perhaps with several thousand victims), mainly in search of effective biological weapon. Moreover, there is strong evidence which suggests that the Americans covered up the deeds and exonerated the doctors and officers (while executing Nazi doctors at Nuremberg), in exchange for the exclusive access to the results of the experiments. Here, works (alas, mainly in Japanese) by Seiichi Morimura, Takao Matsumura, and others have pioneered the field of the uncharted and dark history of Japanese military medicine, which now awaits extensive research. With important public records in the USA (and perhaps in Britain?) now accessible after having been sealed for 50 years, its time for research by an internationally organised team. The reform of medicine in Japan during the post-war occupation period (mainly by the Americans) is the subject of the prize-winning study (in Japanese) by Akiko Sugiyama published in 1996. Based on painstaking research into massive archival material, the author brilliantly highlights the dual purpose of the medical policy imposed by the Americans -- to modernize the badly damaged medical infrastructure of Japan and to prevent it from sliding into the Communist camp.

If one turns one's eye to the social history of popular medical belief and practice, continuity and idiosyncrasy rather than change and Westernization is the eminent feature. In this field of research, Japanese history of early medicine is blessed with extremely rich records: 11th century collection of thousands of popular tales, which includes numerous records of popular

medical practice; exquisitely drawn 12th century comic iconography of various diseases; numerous diaries by aristocratic women, one of whom (10th century) made detailed and vivid entries about her sexual frustration and erotic dreams. With the coming of Edo Era (17th century) and the dawn of modernity in its Japanese version, mouth-watering historical sources proliferated: Ukiyo-e style anatomical illustrations which might have been consumed as pornography; sets of minute records of birth, marriage, disease, and death only dreamed of by historical demographers of any country; advertisements of patent medicines from the eighteenth century in the vibrant medical market of Edo and other provincial towns.

Japanese mentality about medicine, body, health, disease, and death, has turned out to be extremely tenacious, and folklorists and historians are surprising us with the astonishing degree of continuity in our basic attitude to medicine and disease with the past. Thus, for example, one cultural anthropologist presents a case in which a middle-aged man with respectable occupation consults a hospital doctor, accompanied by his wife and daughter, who are very keen to inform every single details of his symptoms to the doctor (while the patient is nodding to what his spouse and daughter say). The wife and daughter are also anxious to understand the "do's and don'ts" the doctor told the patient. This (somewhat extreme, I would say) case shows that a family member's medical consultation is the business of everyone in the household. Disease and medicine are not the affair of an individual, but that of the family. Emiko Namihira's *Illness and culture in Contemporary Japan* (Cambridge U.P., 1984) lucidly sketches people's experience of disease and medicine in a post-industrial and frantically changing society with curious continuity with the ancient notion and practice of health, disease and death. In the much same vein, several works (in English and French) of a Canadian cultural anthropologist Margaret Lock highlights the complex and occasionally agonizing experience of Japanese women, in their own illness and their effort to take care of other family member's (especially parents-in-law) disease, in a society which is still run according to its idiosyncratic gender rules.

To sum up, the situation is somewhat similar to that in Britain or the USA. Medicine in the past and present society and culture has been vigorously researched and critically examined, with thought-provoking insights into wider issues. The crucial drawback is, however, there is the sad lack of any powerful institutional centre of gravity for the Japanese historians of medicine. There does not seem to be an active forum (à la Wellcome or the Johns Hopkins) which would put together a student of Japanese medieval medical manuscripts, that of literary representation of VD, that of post-war drug industry, and so on, under the banner of history of medicine. They are too often isolated from each other. It is true, that there is the Japanese Society for the History of Medicine with its two journals which publish well-researched articles. Due to, however, the lack of human and financial resources, the Society has not become the natural home for the wide range of scholars who are actually practising history of medicine. Another setback is that the historians of Japanese medicine tend to publish their works exclusively in Japanese, a language which many of the readers of this Newsletter have not even dreamed of mastering. Fortunately, the situation is quickly changing, with some first-rate works already available in English, and many fascinating works waiting for English outlets for world-wide readership. The present author can only hope that the SSHM would provide the global window for the two-way traffic, into and from the world of the Japanese history of medicine.

Akihito Suzuki (email: asuzuki@ns.konohana.ne.jp)

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS

(The information given below is accurate as far as we know. However, we accept no responsibility for errors. Please contact the organiser to confirm details.)

### SSHM CONFERENCES.

**Annual Conference: Liverpool, 4-7 September 1997.**

**Health in the City: A History of Public Health**

The annual conference for 1997, a joint meeting with the International Network for the History of Public Health is being held at the Atlantic Tower Hotel. The conference is linked informally to other activities in the history of public health in Liverpool in this year which marks the 150th anniversary of William Henry Duncan's appointment as MOH in Liverpool. A major new exhibition looking at the history of public health on Merseyside: *Liverpool 1847-1997: A Healthy Place to Live?* has now opened and an evening reception will be held for conference goers on Saturday 6th September in the excellent waterfront galleries at the Albert Dock.

As originally intended the meeting will explore urban public health from its origins to the present day. The programme has an excellent interdisciplinary perspective reflected in sessions such as the Economics of Public Health, Pollution, and Health and Race, The Urban Rural Divide. There are several sessions with an emphasis on comparisons between the experience of urban public health in the developed and less developed countries, and the role of national and international organizations in urban health issues (Nationalism & Internationalism, Centres & Peripheries). London and Liverpool as cities of historic importance both receive detailed attention in dedicated sessions: don't worry the tone of the papers is far from parochial. Specific diseases with a crucial impact are also considered in their own sessions (Plague & Tuberculosis). The roles of health professions (Professionals of Public Health) and the people they deal come under scrutiny (Moving People, Moving Disease, Comprehending the Masses). The two breakfast sessions (Public Health Voices, Reinventing Public Health) and a poster session offer a variety of formats to keep the participants on their toes. There are also some planned optional visits to imbibe Liverpool's historic and current glories.

Enquiries for late registration or full programme should be sent to Dr Sally Sheard, Dept of Economic and Social History or Dept of Public Health, University of Liverpool, P0 Box 147, Liverpool L69 3BX. Tel: +44 (0) 151 794 5593. Fax: +44 (0)151 794 5588. Or to Dr Helen Power, Email: hel@liv.ac.uk.

**Autumn 1997: 14 November 1997, Manchester.**

**The Meanings of Practice: Historical and sociological perspectives on the practices of science, technology and medicine.** (Joint Meeting: British Society for the History of Science.

Speakers include: Marc Berg, Harry Collins, Nick Hopwood, Chris Lawrence, Michael Lynch, Paolo Palladino, John Pickstone, Steven Turner, Andrew Warwick.

In recent years, the term practice has been widely adopted by historians and sociologists of science, technology, and medicine to address a number of historiographical and sociological problems. These range from the importance of intellectual developments in the history of science, technology and medicine, to the relationship between social structures and human agency in social theory. The notions of "practice" deployed to solve them seem to vary widely from one context to the another, from the marxist, materialist notion of praxis implicit

in much work of social historians to the notion of the "world in the making" articulated by ethnomethodologists. Although both historians and sociologists often borrow and combine these notions to solve their particular problems, it is not always clear that they can be combined so freely. In fact, some of these historians and sociologists are quite critical about some notions rather than others. The aim of the meeting is to highlight this diversity, without necessarily seeking, probably impossibly, to establish a single meaning of "practice". It might be more fruitful instead to consider the relations between the diverse meanings by bringing together historians and sociologists and asking them to reflect and comment upon this diversity and the reasons for divergence. A booking form is enclosed with this issue of the Gazette but for further information, contact Paolo Palladino, Dept History, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YG, tel: 01524-592793, email: p.palladino@lancaster.ac.uk.

**Spring 1998: Workshop on use of archive medical films in teaching history of medicine. (Joint conference with Forum for Medical Films & History)**  
Further details in next issue.

**Annual Conference: Summer 1998, 17-19 July, Edinburgh.**  
**Medicine and the Public Sphere.**

Speakers include: Logie Barrow, David Cantor, Debbie Brunton. The history of medicine provides a useful lens through which to view the shifting boundary between the public and private spheres, and the changing constitution of the public sphere. This conference will examine such issues by looking at the development of medical care and medical administration in Britain from the late 18th century to the present day. Topics will include the growth of public health, development of the hospital services, organisation and status of medical research and the recent privatisation of the NHS. Further details: Steve Sturdy, Science Studies Unit, University of Edinburgh, 21 Buccleuch Place, Edinburgh EH8 9JT, tel: 0131 650 4014, fax: 0131 650 6886, email: S.Sturdy@ed.ac.uk.

**Autumn 1998: London: CALL FOR PAPERS**

**Innovation: diffusion and resistance in C20 medicine.**

Does your work look at new technologies or techniques, for diagnosis (e.g. CAT scanners), treatment or caring for patients, new ways of organising space or dividing tasks, or old ways revived as 're-innovations' (e.g. leeches)?

Proposals for papers are invited, for a two-day conference in autumn 1998. Building on previous work on the history and sociology of innovations, we want to explore the complexities of diffusion further, looking for instance at effects of changing health service organisation, or links between industry and public sector science, technology and medicine. We also want to consider resistance both in terms of professional rivalries, and as a 'consumer' phenomenon which may lead to counter-innovations - as in the natural childbirth movement or the rise of alternative medicine.

Cross-cultural comparisons, and work on innovations in colonial or Third World countries, will be especially welcome. So will papers that illustrate public perceptions of science and technology in medicine, through analysis of visual and written representations.

Abstracts, enquiries and further details: Dr Jenny Stanton, History Group, HPSU/PHP, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Keppel Street, London WC1E 7HT, tel: 0171-927-2317/2434, Fax: 0171-637-3238, email: J.Stanton@lshtm.ac.uk.

**Spring 1999: Aberdeen.**

**Food, Science and Medicine in the 19th and 20th centuries.**

For further details contact David Smith, Dept Economic & Social History, University of Aberdeen, Taylor Building, Old Aberdeen, Aberdeen AB9 2UB, tel: 01224 273676, email: d.f.smith@abdn.ac.uk.

## NON-SSIM MEETINGS

**Music, Healing & Culture: Towards a Comparative Perspective.**

20-21 August 1997, Royal College of Music & Warburg Institute, London.

This 2 day conference brings together scholars working on the borders between the history of medicine, literary studies, anthropology, musicology and music therapy. Its central focus is the therapeutic powers of music and how these have been used and understood at different times in both Western and non-Western cultures. The first session is part of the 16th International Congress of the International Musicology Society on "Musicology and Sister Disciplines". The 2nd session is a study day at the Warburg Institute. Speakers include Linda Austern, Leslie Bunt, Charles Burnett, Penelope Gouk, John Janzen, Michael Neve, George Rousseau, Lyn Schumaker, Henry Stobart. For further details contact Dr Penelope Gouk, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, University of Manchester. Tel: 0161-275-5910, fax: 0161-275-5699, email: gouk@fs4.ma.man.ac.uk.

**La santé publique au prisme des sciences sociales.**

11-12 septembre 1997, Rennes - Ecole Nationale de la Santé publique.

A three session workshop with the following participants: Emanuelle Mengual, Didier Fassin, Martine Bungener, Alain Giami, Jacques Chaperon, Patrik Zylberman, David Armstrong, Anne-Marie Moulin, Christian Rollet, Anne Hardy, Jean-Paul Gaudiillère, Marcel Goldberg. For further details contact the organisers Luc Berlivet & Claude Martin: Centre de Recherche Administratives et Politiques, CNRS - Institut d'Études Politiques de Rennes, Rennes, France.

**The Sporting Body: Sport, Medicine and Society**

5 December 1997, Linacre College, Oxford.

This one day conference sponsored by the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine includes the following speakers and sessions: Sir Roger Bannister & Prof E Cashmore: 'Race', medicine & society; Prof P Vertinsky, Prof JA Mangan & Ms Fan Hong: Gender, medicine and sport in society; J Hoberman & Dr J Sugden: Performance, medicine and sport in society; Dr J Welshman, Mr T Boon: Fitness, medicine and sport in society. For further information contact: Dr John Welshman, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 45-47 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PE, fax: 01865 274605, email: john.welshman@wuhmo.ox.ac.uk.

**'Family' and 'Household' - Revisiting Concepts and Experience**

2-4 January 1998, Nottingham.

The annual conference of the Social History Society of the UK.

All enquiries to Mrs Linda Persson, Admin Secretary, Social History Society of the UK, Centre for Social History, Lancaster University, Lancaster LA1 4YG. Tel: 44 (0)1524 59605. Email: L.Persson@lancaster.ac.uk.

## CALLS for PAPERS

From Bevan to Bottomley: 50 years of nursing in the nhs. Historical & contemporary issues.  
28th March 1998, Oxford Brookes University.

This is interdisciplinary conference organised around the themes of professional development, gender and education to mark to the 50th anniversary of the NHS.

Papers which address these themes in both their historical and current-day (pre-NHS and post-NHS) dimensions are welcome. Those wishing to give papers are invited to submit a working title and a 250-word abstract by July 31 1997 to Dr Lori Williamson, School of Humanities, Oxford Brookes University, Gipsy Lane Campus, Headington, Oxford, OX 8, email: llwilliamson@brookes.ac.uk. 4 copies of the proposal are requested, 2 with name and academic affiliation, 2 without.

The 'spanish' flu pandemic after 80 years: perspectives on the influenza pandemic of 1918-1919.

Cape Town, South Africa, 6-9 September 1998.

1998 will mark the 80th anniversary of the 'Spanish' Flu pandemic, the worst global pandemic of modern times. Papers (in English) which deal with all aspects of the pandemic are welcome, especially those which foster comparative perspectives. They should fit naturally into one or more of the following sessional themes: 1. influenza pandemics generally, and the nature of the 1918-19 pandemic in particular; 2. patterns of transmission of the 1918-19 pandemic; 3. immediate responses to the 1918-19 pandemic/crisis management; 4. longer-term effects of the 1918-19 pandemic; 5. representations and recollections of the 1918-19 pandemic; 6. recurrences and relationships since 1919. Offers of papers along these lines (title + 400 word abstract) should reach one of the organizers by no later than 31 July 1997. If an offer is accepted, full papers of not more than 5000 words will have to be submitted by 16 February 1998.

Organizers: Dr Howard Phillips, Department of History, University of Cape Town, Private Bag, Rondebosch, 7700, South Africa (Fax: 27+021-6897581; e-mail: HPHIL@BEATTIE.UCT.AC.ZA); Dr David Killingray, Department of Historical & Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, Lewisham Way, New Cross, London SE 14, UK, fax: 0944+171-9197398, email: hsa02dk@gold.ac.uk.

Historical reflections on the medical geographic tradition

5-8 January 1998, Kingston/Guildford, England.

Geography of health & history and philosophy of geography research groups of the RGS/IBG, half-day session with Royal Geographical Society at Institute of British Geographers (RGS/IBG) Annual Conference. Medical geography, as a holistic 'tradition' concerned with health and place that intersects numerous disciplinary boundaries, has undergone tremendous change during its history. The aim of this session is to foster a critical understanding of medico-geographic ideas, and to reassess the historical, and contemporary, impact of medical geography, particularly in light of repeated assertions of its 'apolitical' or 'objective' nature. Given the revival of interest in Western medicine's role different imperial projects, and in the colonization of the human body, it is time to consider the place of medical geographers trained in the US and in Europe in advancing these goals. For further information please contact: Professor Graham Moon, email: Graham.Moon@port.ac.uk or Tim Brown email: Tim.Brown@port.ac.uk, University of Portsmouth, School of Social and Historical Studies, Milldam, Burnaby Road, Portsmouth, PO1 3AS.

New Project: Dr Mary Dobson of the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Oxford and Dr Robert Snow of the Kenya Medical Research Institute, Nairobi are co-ordinating a project on the History of Malaria and its Control in Twentieth-Century East Africa. The project is being funded by the Wellcome Trust and we are currently advertising for a Post-doctoral Research Assistant to work on this project in Oxford and East Africa. Further details of this position can be obtained from Mary Dobson at the address below.

As part of this project and a related one on the British Experience of Malaria at Home and Abroad, we will be conducting a number of oral histories and collecting 'malaria memoirs'. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to share their experiences of malaria and its control with us.

Dr Mary J. Dobson, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 45-47 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6PE, tel: 01865 274608, fax: 01865 274605, email mary.dobson@wuhmo.ox.ac.uk.

LAUNCH MEETING for a proposed national group for medical history collections: Thackray Medical Museum, Leeds: 9 October 1997.

This networking group for London's Museums of Health and Medicine (LMOHM) will cohost a national event with the new Thackray Medical Museum in Leeds. The day is aimed at professional and other staff from the large number of museums nationwide whose collections include material relating to health care and medicine. The cost of the day is £15.00 to include lunch and refreshments. For further details and booking contact: Helen Fryers, Thackray Medical Museum, Beckett Street, Leeds, LS9 7LP, tel: 0113 244 4343, fax: 0113 247 0219.

WOMEN IN MEDICINE DURING WWII: 12 eye-witness accounts with an introduction by Carol Dyhouse. 12 women who graduated in medicine between 1935 and 1948 recount their experiences as students or practitioners in different fields of medicine during WWII. There are 2 appendices, one consisting of notes on the minutes of the Liverpool Branch of the Medical Women's Federation (1938-1945) and the second a resume of the plenary discussion at a 1 day meeting on the theme convened by the Liverpool Medical History Society. Copies (£2.50 cheques payable to Liverpool Medical History Society) from Dr C. Hillam, University of Liverpool, Dept Clinical Dental Sciences, Edwards Building, Liverpool, L69 3BX.

HISTORY OF PSYCHOLOGY: This new scholarly journal will begin quarterly publication early in 1998. Published by the American Psychological Association for its Division of the History of Psychology will be edited by Michael M. Sokal, Professor of History at the Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The Journal will serve as a forum for both psychologists and other interested scholars for the full range of current ideas and approaches pertaining to the relationship between history and psychology. It will primarily feature referred scholarly articles dealing with specific issues, areas and/or individuals in the history of psychology. It will also publish papers in related areas such as historical psychology (the history of consciousness and behaviour), theory in psychology as it pertains to history, historiography, biographical and autobiographical analysis, psychohistory and issues involved in teaching the history of psychology.

## CONFERENCE REPORT

**Music and Medicine: The History of Music Therapy since Antiquity** (in association with SSHM)  
24-25 April 1997, Royal Holloway, University of London

With generous support from the Wellcome Trust as well as SSHM, some forty 'delegates' and fifteen speakers were able to gather in 'historic Egham' last April. Their aim was to explore the history of music as a form of healing - theory and practice, performing and listening - mainly in the European tradition, but also in some cultures of Asia and the Middle East. The audience was wonderfully varied. Some academics came - historians, musicologists, psychologists. But representatives of various caring professions, along with 'lay' enthusiasts, predominated. From their collective experience they could testify to the diversity and vitality of music therapy today. Last year's Channel 4 series, 'Music and the Mind', presented by Paul Robertson (first violinist of the Medici Quartet and one of our speakers), had also brought to a wide public the extraordinary and seemingly effective deployment of music in therapeutic settings that range from the operating theatre to the child development centre. What was lacking was a firm and up-to-date historical context. To my knowledge, the last measured account written in English that embraced antiquity and the Middle Ages as well as more recent centuries was published in 1948. Since then there have of course been numerous contributions dealing with particular facets of the topic. And textbooks of music therapy, such as those by Leslie Bunt (another of our speakers) and Juliette Alvin, have often included summary historical backdrops. But it was high time to take stock: to review, in the light of both modern historical scholarship and scientific evidence, the endlessly recycled anecdotes that too often pass for solid evidence of actual practice, and to reassess those figures whom modern professionals claim as their precursors.

Spaced throughout the two days of the meeting there were presentations that dealt with the contemporary scene: Anthony Storr on the powers of music in general, Keith Howard on the anthropology of shamanism, Paul Robertson on the neurology and cosmology of music therapy, and Leslie Bunt on professional activity in Britain today (the last two using arresting video excerpts). Sandwiched between them was a sequence of historical investigations. Some progressed geographically across Eurasia: Martin West on the ancient Mediterranean, Amnon Shiloah on Judaism and Islam, Jonathan Katz on Hinduism. Others progressed chronologically toward the twentieth century: Christopher Page and Peter Murray Jones on the Middle Ages; Angela Voss and Penelope Gouk on the Renaissance and the early modern period more widely; David Gentilcore and Pilar León on tarantism (the healing cult focusing on the tarantula) in, respectively, seventeenth-century Italy and eighteenth century Spain; and Cheryce Kramer on the nineteenth-century lunatic asylum. To round off, Peregrine Horden briefly noted some of the gaps left by this array of expertise - Chinese medicine and musicology, for example; African ethnography; and occult thought from Mesmerism to Theosophy.

The writer of this report was also the organiser of the conference. So it is not for him to praise the selection or the quality of the speakers. He may, however, be allowed to thank delegates for their spirited response, and to record one general conclusion: despite anecdotes about notable figures such as King David and Pythagoras, music therapy has more often been of philosophical than of actual therapeutic significance. It is largely absent from the great traditions of learned medicine, and, before the nineteenth century, practitioners of it are quite infrequently attested. To that generalisation there is apparently only one major historical exception: Islam. Such a conclusion must, however, be taken as merely provisional. Proper exploration of music therapy as part of the social history of medicine has hardly begun.

Peregrine Horden, Department of History, Royal Holloway, University of London