HEALTH RECORDS CRISIS

At this crucial time when many hospitals are closing, being reorganised or becoming Trusts a large number of health authorities are making no provision for the selection and preservation of records. After many years of discussion and negotiation (in which the SSHM played a part), in 1989 the DHSS finally issued a revision of its Health Circular on the preservation, retention and destruction of records - HC(89)20. One of the key points of this document is that it states that each health authority should designate an officer to make appropriate arrangements for the selection and preservation of records no later than November 1989. To date this has not been done by a large number of authorities, in spite of Public Record Office concern. Worryingly the DH and DSS have now made it clear that they do not intend to pursue the matter. The Health Authorities Archive Group (HAAG) has continued to lobby nationally and locally for action. The SSHM Executive Committee has added its voice to calls for action. Members who feel strongly on this matter are asked to do likewise, by writing nationally to the DH and DSS and locally to health authorities. Further details on this matter can be obtained from: Julia Sheppard, Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, 183 Euston Road, London, NW1 3BP. Tel 071 383 4414.

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

All correspondence about the content and circulation of the Gazette should be sent to the editor, Michael Worboys, Department of Historical and Critical Studies, Sheffield City Polytechnic, Psalter Lane, Sheffield, S11 8UZ, Great Britain. Telephone 0742 532686 or 532685. FAX 0742 532603.

DISCLAIMER It is stressed that any views expressed in this Gazette are those of the Editor or the named contributor; they are not necessarily those of the Executive Committee or general membership. While every care is taken to provide accurate and helpful information in this Gazette, the Society for the Social History of Medicine, the Chair of its Executive Committee and the Editor of the Gazette accept no responsibility for omissions or errors or their subsequent effects. Readers are expected to check all essential information appropriate to specific circumstances.
European Association for the History of Psychiatry (EAHP)

This new association has recently been formed to promote research into the history of psychiatry in its widest sense, to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and to encourage cross-disciplinary discussion. Membership is £15.00; FF150; DM 45. The Association is producing a newsletter edited by Roy Porter and German Berrios. Further details of the EAHP can be obtained from Dr German E. Berrios, Robinson College, Cambridge, CB3 9AN.

Women's History Network

This is a new group aimed at bringing together anyone involved in women's history. For further information on how to join write to: Women's History Network, Department of History, University of York, York, YO1 5DD, Great Britain. The first annual conference of the Network will be held at the University of Nottingham on 12-13 September 1992. For more information please send a large stamped addressed envelope to: Helen Mellor, Florence Nightingale, University of Nottingham, Nottingham NG7 2RD, Great Britain.

Executive Committee

At the meeting on 14 February four new members were welcomed: Mark Harrison, Dorothy Porter, David Smith and David Wright; John Henderson was re-elected. John Woodward was re-elected as Chair for 1992. Gerry Kearns will be Honorary Secretary until the summer and Bernard Harris has now taken over the post of Treasurer.

---/-----/---

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. Notice of events, not only conferences, for inclusion in this section should be sent to the Editor. We reserve the right to edit and select items for inclusion.

Society for the Social History of Medicine

Annual Summer Conference 1992
Communities "Caring" and Institutions
3-5 July 1992, St. Edmund Hall and All Souls College, Oxford. Speakers include: Andrew Scull, Ann Crowther, Anne Digby, Jane Lewis, Sandra Cavallo, Marjorie McIntosh, Anne Borsay, Margaret Dupree, Mary Clare Martin, Leonard Smith, Julia Twigg, Lara Marks, Sandra Burman, Peregrine Horden, Hugh Freeman, David Wright, John Murray, Peter Bartlett, Mathew Thompson, Akihito Suzuki, Sandra Burman, Zhongwei Zhao, Jane Robinson and Mary Clare Martin. Fees and full board: SSHM members £95.00; non-members £100. Full details are enclosed within this mailing. Details from: Richard Smith, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 45-47 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 6PE.

Autumn Conference 1992
From 'Idiocy' to 'Mental Deficiency': Historical Perspectives on People with Learning Disabilities
Saturday 17 October 1992, Institute of Historical Research, University of London. Speakers include: Hilary Dickinson, David Wright, David Gladstone, David Barker and Mathew Thompson. Details from: David Wright, Linacre College, Oxford.

Spring Conference 1993
History of Nutrition in Twentieth Century Britain
April 1993, University of Glasgow, Glasgow. Speakers include: Mark Weatherall, Sally Horrocks, Susan Williams, Tim Boon, David Smith. Details from: Dr David Smith, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 5 University Gardens, University of Glasgow, Glasgow G12 8GG.

Annual Summer Conference 1993
Computers and the Social History of Medicine
July 1993, University of Southampton, Southampton. Offers of papers, software and workshop sessions welcome. Contact: Dr Bernard Harris, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, University of Southampton, Highfield, Southampton, SO9 5NH.

Other Meetings

1992 European Year of Safety, Hygiene and Health Protection at Work
2 July 1992, SCI, 14-15 Belgrave Square, London SW1 8PS. Details from: Conference Department, The Royal Society of Health, 38A St George's Drive, London, SW1V 4BH.

The Obliteration of the New World, 1492-1992
17 October 1992, Dept. of Adult Education, University of Leicester. Speakers include: Warwick Bray, Don Brothwell, Linda Newson, Larry Gorenflo, Kenneth Mills and Stephen Nugent. Details from: A.E. Brown, Adult Education, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH.

Disease and Society in the Developing World: Exploring New Perspectives
24-27 September 1992, Francis C. Wood Institute for the History of Medicine, College of Physicians, Philadelphia. Details from: Dr Caroline Hannaway, Francis C. Wood Institute for the History of Medicine, College of Physicians of Philadelphia, 19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA 19103.
Famine. Although unable to appear as billed, Sen’s presence was noted large. Peter Nolan led the attack in his paper, ‘Why do famines occur? China, A.K. Sen, and famine-genes’. The discussion focused on the higher degree of vulnerability that poorer countries suffer which reduces their institutional flexibility and capability for dealing with food output decline, particularly on a large scale.

Session 2: Famine and epidemic disease - This session turned to the historical record and to disease, crisis and epidemic mortality, the relationship between these and behavioural and social factors, and inevitably led into the role of nutrition. Tony Wrigley set the background by looking at the role of infant mortality in the eighteenth century and the factors which may account for falling rates. The major finding was that falling endogenous mortality was the most significant factor in changing infant and child mortality rates. Infant mortality was less sensitive than mortality in other age groups to mortality surges and only weakly associated with real wages. Mary Dobson came up with a check-list of areas for future historical demographic and epidemiological research. David Arnold focused more generally on the problems of studying famine and disease in the past and the importance of behaviour on epidemic disease and social crises in nineteenth century India and South East Asia. He also discussed the importance of thinking about relationships between survival strategies of a population (e.g. migration), changes in local environment and administrative policy. Elizabeth Whitcombe and Tim Dyson illuminated these issues. Elizabeth Whitcombe highlighted the link between the medical and administrative records of famine mortality and administrative responses to famine and famine related diseases, malaria and malnutrition in Madras, 1877-78, and the Punjab, 1896-7 and 1908. Tim Dyson set these in the wider context comparing the increase in death rates as part of a time series and in different provinces. He also considered the different demographic responses to epidemic disease and to famine, the degree and effect of mass migration, and the importance of the relationship between mortality, disease and nutrition. The following papers elaborated further on this relationship. Del Panta and Samoggia (Bologna) found only a very weak association between caloric intake and the proportion of deaths attributable to disease associated with undernutrition for post-unification Italy (1861-1921) but a stronger association at provincial level which may be due to specific agricultural changes in different areas as their commentator, Viazzo, suggested. At this date subsistence crises no longer occurred although caloric intake per capita did drop between 1881 and 1896 (to a low of under 1800 calories). The word surveyed a variety of sources from the Irish famine period for indicators of nutritional status and specific diseases associated with vitamin deficiencies, finding excess proportions of deaths and cases in her data. There is however the category of problem both of a cause but also of purpose in the records used although as her commentator, Nelson (Uppsala) noted the use of contemporary reports to reveal nuances in the different effects of short and long term crises.

Who cared for the mentally ill in Western Australia (WA) between 1830 and 1903?

Clare Olney focuses on the concept of mental illness as perceived by alienists of the time in WA. We have access to admission registers, doctors' journals and daily records kept by matrons and wardens. However, these sources are limited. We would welcome correspondence concerning the care and treatment of the mentally ill in WA during this period as much of the care was carried out by British subjects/colonists. Please write to: Dr Nancy Hudson-Rodd and Gerry Farrel, Faculty of Health and Human Science, Edith Cowan University, Pearson Street, Perth, WA 6018, Australia. FAX 09-387-7095

CONFERENCE REPORTS

Famine and Disease 5-7 July 1991, Christ's College, Cambridge

The conference was organised into four major sessions: 'famine - concepts and causes'; 'famine and epidemic disease'; 'famine and malnutrition'; and 'famine - responses and effects'.

Session 1: Famine: concepts and causes - This session was the shortest and broadly set the agenda for the conference as a whole by raising theoretical, political and economic issues from the history of recent famines. Alex de Waal in a case study of the southern Sudanese famine of 1985-89 looked at famine as man-made and at the political and human rights aspects. Together with his commentator Steven Devereaux he drew out the importance of war as a causal mechanism in turning hunger and hardship into famine, with associated increases in disease and death rates, and in this case one of the highest death rates from frank starvation in an African
Session 3: Famine and malnutrition - The emphasis then moved from disease to nutrition. Fogel and Floud gave an overview of their research project on nutritional status and mortality in France, England and the USA. This is well documented elsewhere but was interesting as an introduction and as an update on the largest and most aggregative qualitative and quantitative research projects being undertaken. Inevitably it suffers from being unable to answer questions on regional differences and those requiring local or qualitative information on, for example, gender differentials, infant and maternal nutrition, infant feeding practices. O'Grada examined pre-famine Ireland suggesting that it was poor but relatively well fed, though with low expectations of life. Irish army recruits were taller than the English suggesting a relatively good long term diet, a finding confirmed by an examination of the Irish diet. He enthusiastically expanded on the different nutritional and taste qualities of the spud - particularly the lumpur. His commentator however felt that his revisionist and optimistic analysis of Irish diet was unjustified. Wall's paper surveyed the evidence for poorer nutrition and care of female children from the School Medical Inspectors' reports for a variety of towns and areas. Tony Waldren looked at the problems in finding evidence of malnutrition from the archaeological record.

The next section was a panel discussion on the subject of nutrition and gender. This drew together the empirical work on maternal and child nutrition being carried out by Anne Frentice and the Dunn Nutrition Unit in the Gambia and a discussion paper by Megan Vaughan and Jane Humphries on the gendered nature of the debate surrounding nutrition and female nutritional requirements in anthropological and development work, and in economic and social history (in particular focusing on the gaps in data on the household economy and on the domesticity/working women/infant care debate in economic and social history). The Dunn Nutrition Unit's findings were particularly salutary for historians, for whom it is all too easy to over-generalise and stick to outdated references on nutrition and the hormonal mechanisms of breastfeeding. A useful point was the 'child-driven' nature of breast milk output and that a sick child will suckle less actively. All too often the emphasis in historical writing is on the body fat/weight of the mother.

Session 4: Famine: responses and effects - Paul Slack's, Chris Dyer and Louise Tilley's papers presented the differing responses of government and population to the threat of death or famine. Paul Slack's paper made clear the long history of governmental involvement in food and crisis management, and how his involvement in early modern England, though unpopular at the time, did increase both authority and the legitimacy of government without recourse to coercion. Chris Dyer's paper on famine in England showed both ingenuity and made a daily diet dry area rich with analysis. Both deserve to be widely read. Louise Tilley looked at the variation in response to food shortages and the decline of food riots in France in the eighteenth century.

The final three papers were packed with empirical data. Lunn and van Gervel have analysed the long term effects of the Dutch famine of 1944-5. This is one of the few sources of good, longitudinal data, which has revealed that women conceived or born during or immediately after the famine have a greater risk of having low birth weight babies. Arup Maharana and Dim Dyson presented separate papers on the demography of the Bengal famine in 1943-4, and the Bihar famine, 1966-7, and Maharashtra Scarcity of 1970-73. Arup Maharana, unusually for historical work, has been able to analyse quantitative data on rice production, birth and death rates and look at specific causes of death for the years preceding and following the famine. Roger Wilson, an obstetrician, and Ken Wilson summed up and brought the conference to a close, commenting on the usefulness of these studies in contemporary work and in avoiding famine.

Conclusion - As the conference progressed it became apparent that the conference might perhaps have been better titled 'famine and nutrition' or perhaps 'food and mortality crises and nutrition'. This reflects the way the conference did draw out the processes which may lead to famine and the variables which need to be examined and estimated. At the broad socioeconomic level - the role of government policy, human agency and social institutions, the assessment of food output and ability to meet the individual level - food and nutritional levels and the different kinds of undernutrition, at the biomedical/physiological level - the effect of nutritional levels and changes and the relationship of disease and nutrition; at the population level. One of the problems I have in writing up this report is way that, I have often felt, historians have dealt with famine, dearth, disease and nutrition either in isolation or lumped together and ignored the processes which may lead to famine or become labelled as famine. It has been easy for authors such as Meek to argue that improved nutrition led directly to lower mortality rates, higher fertility and population growth, and to simply writing without looking at the population or the economy or the important role of health in history. The economic perspective of the eighteenth century vital or economic statistics. Authors such as Camporesi still want to see Europe as one great disaster area of constant misery, mass starvation, severe malnutrition (less than 2000 calories per day), daily death. But without attempting to look at either demographic rates and regional variation or the processes which may or may lead to famine or dearth. He argues that institutions served only to keep the poor at this marginal level but finally broke down in the eighteenth century and the age of revolutions. There is a place for the medical evidence that he uses but essentially this kind of work is so broad as to be of doubtful use. At least the study of famine of the eighteenth century voices the same qualms, rather more strongly, and shows the methodologies and data that is available to historians of famine. For historians the study of famine is made more difficult because it has been common to use any one concept of famine needs to be deconstructed and the concepts and relationships between dearth, food, nutrition and disease constantly need to be addressed. At the same time and with new theoretical insights it is then possible for the social,
political and economic historian to redress the historical record alongside new empirical analysis from the developments in demographic and historical epidemiological research. This is what the conference aimed to do and in which it so evidently succeeded.

Jenny Wood
Cambridge Population Group

---/---

Annual Report for 1991 by the Chair of the Executive Committee

It had not been my expectation to be standing before you again to present the Annual Report of SSHM. I had served a three year term as Chair at the last AGM, but the incoming Executive Committee asked me to serve once more. So, it is my privilege to present the Annual Report to the members of SSHM and to thank the members of the EC for their continuing confidence in my role as Chair.

This year has been an eventful one for SSHM. There has been an ongoing examination of the role of the Society in promoting the academic discipline and in providing a real service for all the members, academic or otherwise. Thus, all areas of the Society's activities have come under review either through the various sub-committees or directly from the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee, on the recommendation of the representative on the Society on the Editorial Board of the Journal, undertook to support a separate Gazette to be inserted in the Journal. The Gazette, replacing the section devoted to the Society in the Journal, contains a great deal of information relevant to the diverse interests of the membership, including direct news of the Society, its programme and activities; as well as news of more general interest, including the activities of other organizations. It is possible to include the most up-to-date information as the deadline for copy is very close to the date of publication of the Journal. This major initiative has been welcomed by all and we would encourage further contributions to it by the members, including details of meetings to be held, research in progress as well as responses to specific requests. Substantial thanks must go to the Editor, Michael Worboys, who has spent much time and effort on this project.

The Programmes and Publicity Sub-Committee, under the convenership of John Henderson, has initiated a series of successful activities. A meeting organized in conjunction with the Health Authorities Archivists Group was held in April 1991 on "Health Care Records: Selection, Preservation & Use". The meeting brought together archivists, historians and doctors to discuss this major issue at a time of change in the National Health Service. The Annual Conference, held in Cambridge in early July, on "Famine and Disease" was of great significance for SSHM. A priority of this year had been to encourage wider international participation and the involvement of younger researchers, including postgraduates. This conference, organized by John Henderson and Peter Garnsey, succeeded admirably in that objective. Over one hundred people registered for the conference, the largest number in our history, and it was agreed by all that the papers delivered were of the highest quality. Also, the Presidential Address on "Famine, Pestilence and Social Policy in Early Modern England" was given at this conference and it is the intention to maintain this occasion for future Presidential Addresses. The Autumn meeting on "Ethnicity, Religion and the History of Health Care Provision", bringing together participants and speakers from a wide range of backgrounds, produced excellent discussions. An initiative to hold a series of seminars outside of London led to meetings in Sheffield and Leicester, and a decision as to whether to continue this series will be taken shortly. The weekly seminar series at the Institute of Historical Research was discontinued this year as the sub-committee and the EC felt that we should concentrate our energies on one day meetings and the annual conference. Cathy Crawford and Lara Marks have been responsible for the admirable publicity for our meetings and have shown remarkable ingenuity in expanding the circulation of publicity material. We all appreciate their time-consuming efforts to promote the activities of the Society.

The Publications Sub-Committee, under the convenership of Margare Pelling, has seen the successful outcome, after a lengthy period of negotiation and hard work, of the Society's book series. The series' overall title is 'Studies in the Social History of Medicine'. The first two books, Medicine and Charity before the Welfare State, edited by J. Barry and C. Jones; and Life, Death and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives, edited by M. Pelling and R. Smith, were published in November. The third, in the name of the Child, edited by R. Cooper, will be in March 1992. The proposal for a fourth volume on Foucault, edited by C. Jones and R. Porter, has been accepted by Routledge; and a proposal for a fifth, based on the 1991 Annual Conference on The AIDS epidemic, edited by P. Garnsey and J. Henderson, is being submitted. The series' covers are distinctly designed in the Society's colours and with the Society's logo on the back. Each volume includes a brief statement about the Society's aims. We have to report, with much regret, the departure from Routledge of Gill Davies, with whom the contract was initially negotiated, before Tavistock was amalgamated with Routledge and Croom Helm). A distinguishing feature of the other books in the series is the price, set for each of the first two volumes at £45.00. Strong representations have been made to Routledge and a discounted price of £35.00 for members has been negotiated. Publishing has been delayed considerably by the unions, and this seems to have increased the tendency to ignore the interests of the individual purchaser. In addition, we are concerned that the price is being decided, in part, by low sales expectations based on more specialist areas in the history of medicine. The present contract dates
from July 1989 and is for five years in the first instance. Routledge has, in other respects, done very well by and for the Society and it would be difficult to be certain that other publishers could give us better treatment overall. Nonetheless, the trend of publishing fewer copies of more books has its dangers, and the Society may need to defend not only its obligations to its members, and its desire to reach the widest possible audience, but also its commitment not to forsake quality for quantity. Having been mainly responsible for the inception of the series, and having served a full term of five years as series editor, Margaret Pelling has decided not to stand for the additional term of two years for which she is eligible. We are delighted to announce that Jonathan Barry has been appointed as her successor.

After considerable thought and discussion, the Records Sub-Committee, convened by Julia Sheppard, has been stood down. It was felt that any initiatives in relation to the preservation of, access to, and knowledge about health records could be more easily dealt with through the remaining committee structures.

The academic reputation of the Journal goes from strength to strength and, in many circles, is being regarded as in the vanguard of the history of medicine and as being the Journal of first choice for the submission of articles. This is due to the efforts of the Editor, the members of the Editorial Board, and the many others who act as referees for their tireless efforts in furthering the cause of SSHM through the Journal. A separate Report from the Journal forms part of the Agenda of this meeting.

The membership of the Society continues to grow, now consisting of 522 individual members and 245 institutional members (as at 30-11-91). An objective of the EC to enhance the overseas membership has been achieved and we are optimistic that all aspects of the membership will continue to increase, though perhaps not at the same rate as previously. The increased membership helps to provide a solid financial foundation for the activities of SSHM. Our Treasurer, Jonathan Barry, has been assiduous in ensuring that income is maximized and expenditure minimized. Thus, for the current year the subscription going to support the activities of SSHM has been held constant. Indeed, the overall subscription for 1992 has been held at £16.00, to include the Journal and the Gazette. This rate compares extremely favourably with that for other societies of a similar nature. It is the intention of the EC to promote more widely the availability of Associate Membership, at a subscription rate of £2.00, which entitles those members to receive the Gazette though not the Journal.

I now turn to the personnel of SSHM. This year has seen and will see a number of changes. Our President for this Year, Paul Slack, offered tremendous support to the Society and gave an excellent Address at the annual conference. Mary Fissell, the Honorary Secretary, resigned from the EC. She was an extremely enthusiastic and efficient Secretary and we will all miss her efforts on behalf of the Society - we wish her well in her new academic position in the United States. Bill Luckin, whose contributions to the Programme and Publicity Sub-Committee will be missed, also resigned from the EC. Both members found themselves unable to support decisions taken by the Editorial Board which they regarded as involving issues of censorship. There were also opposing views on the issues of principle. However, legal and other considerations had to be taken into account by the Executive Committee and by the Editorial Board and difficult decisions had to be taken. Margaret Pelling, a long-standing member of the EC, who has occupied many responsible positions, most recently as Convener of the Publications Sub-Committee and Series' Editor, is retiring from the EC. Her time as Editor of the Bulletin prepared the way for the publication of the Journal. Again, we will miss her extraordinary contribution to the Society over a period of fifteen years. Jonathan Barry, the Hon. Treasurer, completed his three year term of office at the last AGM but agreed to carry on for a further year. He now leaves this position and we thank him for maintaining the financial stability of the Society. Bernard Harris has agreed to take his place. John Henderson, as Convener of the Programmes and Publicity Sub-Committee, completes a three year term. However, we will be welcoming new members to the Executive Committee who are enthusiastic in their desire to further the objectives of the Society.

As will be seen from this Annual Report, SSHM undertakes a number of very considerable activities on behalf of its members. It is no longer the simple organization of its early days but, however, the system of democracy which is inherent in the constitution and flows through to the membership of the Society, its sub-committees and to the Editorial Board of the Journal attempts to ensure that members' views are taken into account at every level. SSHM, for a society of its size and responsibilities, is almost unique in this regard. I have to thank all of you for your support and, in particular, the many people with whom I have to deal in organizing and running this Society. The members of the EC regret very much, however, that, given the representative nature of the organization of SSHM, so few members offer their services to the Society. If SSM is to remain vibrant and active members cannot expect to depend on a few willing individuals to continue to carry the considerable time-consuming burdens which have made this Society so successful. This is an active and thriving Society and all of us wish to see the Society maintain its present position. The members of the EC support fully the objectives of the Society and we trust that all the individual members will do all they can to support and promote the Society.

John Woodward, December, 1991
Executive Committee 1992

John Woodward (Chair), Department of History, University of Sheffield, Sheffield, S10 2TN
Andrew Scull (President)
Jonathan Barry (Publications)
Catherine Crawford (Publicity)
Bernard Harris (Treasurer)
Mark Harrison
John Henderson (Programme)
Gerry Kearns (Honorary Secretary)
Lara Marks
Dorothea Porter
David Smith
Richard Smith (Journal Editor)
Michael Worboys (Gazette)
David Wright

Membership of the Society for the Social History of Medicine includes a subscription to the journal and is paid through: Journals Marketing Department, Oxford University Press, Pilkington House, Southfield Road, Eynsham, Oxford, OX8 1JJ. The subscription in 1992 is £15 (UK and Europe) and $28 elsewhere. Details of membership and of the Society’s activities are available from the Chair at the above address.

F.E. WHITEHART
RARE BOOKS

SPECIALISTS IN RARE AND OUT OF PRINT MEDICINE BOOKS

Our stock of medicine and psychology books spans five centuries and encompasses all aspects of the subject. For our latest catalogue, sent free of charge to any destination, please telephone or write to the address below.

We also buy books in this field, from single works to complete libraries, and we undertake searches for wanted books.

40 Priestfield Road
Forest Hill
London, SE23 2RS

Tel: 081-699 3225
Fax: 081-291 1605