surgery, or with those who might become great men, would be of interest only within the profession, but the surgical details are condescendingly described in lay terms. Gullet and digestive juices figure prominently. The historians of the NHS can learn something from this account of the enthusiasm which pervaded the early years but less from the chapters devoted to the present discontents. McKeown's views on the managerial revolution are predictable, although not for that reason misconceived; his comments on the current situation lack freshness for the good reason that his opinions are those of the great majority of his contemporaries. There are here many truthful reflections upon the nature of health care but they are essentially retrospective. New thinking cannot ignore these truths but they do not constitute a blue print for future construction.

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Duncan Crewe, *Yellow Jack and the worm: British naval administration in the West Indies, 1739–1748*, Liverpool Historical Studies 9, Liverpool University Press, 1993, pp. xiii, 321, £17.50 (0-85323-267-9).

In his very detailed account of British naval administration in the West Indies during the war years of 1739–1748, when the navy dramatically increased its presence in Caribbean waters, Duncan Crewe has presented a picture of a paternalistic navy doing its best for its crews and ships whilst being mindful, but not overly so, of the need to economize. The book discusses the health care of sick sailors, and the provisioning and repair of ships. The West Indies station caused immense damage to both men and ships, yellow fever largely accounting for the former and the "worm" *teredo navalis*, which thrived in warm waters and ate its way through wooden hulls, for the latter.

Medical historians should find Crewe's data on health care useful, for they provide further empirical evidence that confirms recent work on the commercial nature of eighteenth-century English medicine. The navy operated a mixed system of health care. Usually it put out to tender the daily care of its sick in the West Indies. The successful contractor had to provide medical men and nurses to care for the sick on shore, and also food and drink for the men, and their funerals if required. The contractor was reimbursed at an agreed daily rate per man and additionally for items such as funerals or for the extra cost of smallpox cases. When the cost of food, rum and wine was driven up by the war the contractors made heavy losses and although partly reimbursed by the navy they lost interest in the business. The navy, as N A M Rodger has pointed out in *The wooden world*, was the largest organization in eighteenth-century England and it is not surprising that it took direct charge of the shore care of the sick when it considered that the numbers of sick had become too great for any private contractor to cope with.

The sick were housed in a variety of places: in their own ships, in hospital ships, in the hospital houses at Port Royal that the navy had on short lets from local house owners and in the new purpose-built hospital (1744). A combination of the need to keep the sick securely locked up and so prevent them from deserting, which they did in large numbers from the hospital houses, and a wish to reduce the extraordinarily high death rate led to the creation of the hospital at New Greenwich. It failed to bring down mortality and the subsequent investigation of its failure illustrates the concern of the navy with the health of its men, the way in which laymen's opinions (navy captains') were given credence as well as those of navy surgeons, and the different reasons that were available to explain why the sick died or were discharged "invalid" in even greater numbers than in the hospital houses.

On a more general level the book confirms the view of the eighteenth-century British navy as generous in its supply of provisions for its crews and concerned to detect deterioration in the quality of the vast tonnage shipped to the West Indies. It also brings home to the reader

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how a very different sense of time governed the way that the relations between the local West Indies naval bureaucracy and the central one in London were structured, with an order or explanation taking weeks or months to arrive, whilst nine months might elapse between the request for food or medicines and their arrival. Such time-lags encouraged a degree of local independence but all the major financial decisions were made in England with the result that the time taken to initiate projects such as the new hospital might appear very lengthy from a modern perspective. However, it seems from the surviving correspondence that delay in communications between the West Indies and England was not seen as a problem but that the "real time" delay in Jamaica in completing the building of the hospital was.

At a less abstract level the book is full of nitty-gritty details, and the acrimonious quarrels between the naval commanders and the island governors and their assemblies over the pressing of men from merchant ships and over the navy's attempt to import rum without paying local duty provide entertaining reading as well as illustrating that the British state was not yet monolithic.

Although the book is really one for the naval historian, other historians may well find that the rich store of empirical data which has been ably put into a coherent and informative narrative sets them thinking.

Andrew Wear, Wellcome Institute

Juan Antonio Rodríguez-Sánchez, *Historia de los balnearios de la provincia de Málaga*, Málaga, Centro de Ediciones de la Diputación de Málaga, 1994, pp. 287, illus., no price given (84-7785-101-8).

Some years ago Roy Porter commented on the paucity of historical research into "balneology in its widest sense, and upon the historical phenomena of the spa city, spa-life and water-cure establishment". In a very localized setting, Rodríguez-Sánchez's monograph puts into focus some of these issues for Málaga, a province of abundant springs and several spas, one of which—Carratraca—became during the nineteenth century one of the principal spas of the Iberian peninsula.

Los balnearios is a careful examination of the spas of Málaga as health resorts, as well as of their location within, and implications for, the geographical and socio-economic framework of the province. Hence, after a brief sketch of the history of hydrology in Spain, Rodríguez-Sánchez sets out to map the interplay between the demography and infrastructure of the province and the spa-cities. Discussing the network of approach roads, ways of transport, housing and leisure facilities, he points at some interesting differences and similarities between Málaga's spas and the better-known ones of central and northern Europe. What most prominently figures here is the peculiar difficulty of access, mainly due to the non-existence of railways, affecting not only attendance but also preventing the commercialization of bottled water. Housing conditions at Málaga's spas were, in comparison, extremely austere (with the partial exception of Carratraca). As with many other European spa-cities, however, gambling at Carratraca became a popular form of entertainment and one of its most distinctive attractions, creating much the same tensions as elsewhere.

Rodríguez-Sánchez next focuses on the spas as health resorts. He describes the gradual transformation of the uses of the springs for healing purposes ultimately into privately owned spas during the nineteenth century, and discusses the nature of the role of physicians, and conflicts between them and the owners of the spas. He also surveys the analyses of the waters and the changing conditions that were treated at the spas (although unfortunately he never quite explains why these changes occurred) and additionally the author presents a break-down of the social origins of the patients attending the establishments.

What Rodríguez-Sánchez never really seeks to interpret and contextualize, however, are the

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