

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London

On 30 September 2000, the Academic Unit of the Wellcome Institute will cease to exist, to undergo reincarnation as the Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at University College London. This is in line with decisions taken by the Wellcome Trust's Governors back in June 1999, and is the product of extensive and successful negotiations between the Trust and UCL conducted over the course of the last year. From 1 October, the Centre will become a formal part of University College, within the Department of Anatomy and Developmental Biology, though its actual location will remain at Euston House, 24 Eversholt Street, London NW1 1AD. (There are plans for relocation back in 183 Euston Road in due course.)

To some degree this change may be seen as a piece of repackaging, a matter of old wine in new bottles. All of the Unit's academic and clerical staff retain their posts in the new set-up, and the range of its activities—research, teaching at all levels from the undergraduate to doctoral, staging seminars and symposia, publishing (including *Medical History*) and wider “outreach”—will remain largely the same. But there will be some change in emphasis. “Centre status”, in the eyes of the Trust, implies first and foremost a fundamental commitment to primary research, some of it conducted collectively, in accordance with the Aristotelian principle that “the whole is greater than the sum of the parts”. More conspicuously than the former Unit, the Centre will be a research-oriented centre of excellence.

The link-up between the Trust and UCL will confer immediate benefits upon the new Centre. An Administrator has been appointed; two new HEFC-funded junior lectureships are being advertised, one of them in modern medicine; and a new chair of medical history has been created, whose first incumbent, Professor Harold Cook, will serve as the Centre's Director.

Hal Cook, who takes up his post on 1 October 2000, will be known to all readers of *Medical History* as a distinguished historian of early-modern medicine and science. The focus of his early researches—some of them conducted while on visits to the Institute—was mainly English, leading amongst other publications to *The decline of the old medical regime in Stuart London* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1986), a major study of the College of Physicians. In more recent years, he has been working also on Dutch, and Anglo-Dutch topics. The fruits of such researches include *Trials of an ordinary doctor: Joannes Groenevelt in seventeenth-century London* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), a study of a Dutch-born physician who practised in England. Hal is currently conducting research on medical botany, with especial regard to the Dutch East Indies Company.

The activities which over the years made the Academic Unit and the Institute so prominent in the promotion of the history of medicine will all continue. Within the framework of the Centre they will be strengthened by a renewed and expanded commitment to research.

Roy Porter

The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL

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The e-mail addresses of individual members of staff
remain unchanged until further notice.