

# News, Notes, and Queries

## Tony Bish Retires

For many years the Wellcome Library's conservation section has been at the forefront of conservation, and its team of dedicated conservators have done great work to ensure the preservation of the Library's unique collection of Western and Asian manuscripts, rare books and archives for research into the understanding and history of medicine. As Head of Conservation for twenty years, Tony Bish, one of Britain's most highly regarded conservators, played a vital role. His retirement truly marks the end of an era.

Tony began his conservation career in the 1960s, after National Service in the army. During his bookbinding apprenticeship he studied at Brighton College of Art and Crafts with John Plummer. In 1968 he was appointed the first conservator at the East Sussex Record Office and was responsible for creating a new conservation department. From there he moved to the Royal Greenwich Observatory in 1980, where again he was responsible for establishing a new conservation section. When in 1984 the archives moved from Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex, to Cambridge University Library, Tony joined the Wellcome Library as Chief Conservator.

Tony has been presented with many challenges, including undertaking meticulous practical work on important manuscripts and books housed in the library's rich and wide collections of material on paper, papyrus, palm leaves, bone, precious metals, parchment and historical binding structures. As a result of his own practical experiences, Tony has made it his mission to encourage the professional development of conservators and is well known for his involvement in the provision of training opportunities for new and established conservators. This is also evident in his

work for the professional membership bodies, the Society of Archivists and the Institute of Paper Conservation, where he played an active role in the accreditation scheme for professional conservator-restorers. He has successfully integrated old school values with new school ideals, a rare ability, as well as managing the increasing conservation and preservation requirements, including Wellcome initiated exhibitions and collection care needs. He has helped to ensure the successful promotion of the Wellcome Library's collections by advising on the preservation, display, security and the transport of exhibition material. Examples are *Medicine Man*, opened in 2003 at the British Museum, and the various ongoing Science Museum exhibitions. Tony's long service to conservation was recently formally recognized by his peers with the award of a Fellowship to the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic works.

Following on from his years of teaching, assessing and advising on many major conservation and preservation courses and projects on a worldwide basis, Tony plans to continue actively promoting the knowledge, methods and standards needed to protect and preserve the world's cultural heritage. In retirement his experience and talent will still be available, and undoubtedly much in demand. His achievements at the Wellcome Library are impressive and will continue to be built on in the future. Tony will be remembered with affection and gratitude by friends and colleagues alike.

**Lara Artemis,**  
Wellcome Library

*Call for Papers*  
American Association for the History of Medicine Meeting  
7–10 April 2005

The American Association for the History of Medicine invites submissions in any area of medical history for its 78th annual meeting, to be held in Birmingham, Alabama, 7–10 April 2005. Presentations are limited to 20 minutes and must represent original work not already published or in press. This year, the AAHM is using an online abstract submission system at the

website: <http://www.histmed.org/>. If it is not possible to submit online, eight copies of a one-page abstract (350 words maximum) can be sent to the Program Committee Chair: Walton O Schalick, III, MD, PhD, Washington University, Department of History, One Brookings Drive, Box 8116, St Louis, MO 63110, USA; [schalick@artsci.wustl.edu](mailto:schalick@artsci.wustl.edu).

*Journal des Médecines Cunéiformes*

The aim of this new journal is to publish articles on all aspects of medicine in texts written in the cuneiform script (which mostly stem from ancient Mesopotamia and Anatolia).

While the field of “cuneiform medicine” is not new, and vaunts increasing scholarly activity, too many historians of medicine ignore, over-simplify, or simply are not aware of cuneiform medicine.

One significant problem is that many of the thousand-odd cuneiform medical and related texts have not yet been edited or translated. Accordingly, this journal will carry text editions and translations, making the sources accessible to readers unfamiliar with the ancient languages. Interdisciplinary in outlook and goals, it publishes articles (in all the major European languages) of varying format, length, and content, from specialized studies to papers with broader themes or pedagogic goals. It does not

adopt a restricted notion of scholarship, and is open to diverse perspectives, and to the exchange of ideas.

Articles already published include the proceedings of a workshop on ancient Mesopotamian medicine held at the British Museum in July 2003, with papers by many of the leading authorities in the field. Contributions are welcome from historians of medicine, professional physicians, anthropologists, and all others who can help elucidate medicine in cuneiform sources, at the dawn of history.

For subscriptions and further information please contact Dr Gilles Buisson, AZUGAL, 14 rue de la Salle, 78100 Saint-Germain-En-Laye, France ([gilles.buisson9@wanadoo.fr](mailto:gilles.buisson9@wanadoo.fr)). Submissions may be sent to Dr Annie Attia, 68 Avenue d’Italie, 75013 Paris, France ([attia@noos.fr](mailto:attia@noos.fr)).