

Book Notices

STEVE WOOLGAR (ed.), *Knowledge and reflexivity: new frontiers in the sociology of knowledge*, London, Sage Publications, 1991, pp. x, 214, £10.95 (paperback, 0-8039-8121-X).

Reflexivity is a problem which has bugged the sociology of scientific knowledge since it began in earnest two decades ago. If knowledge is constituted through and through by social factors, what are the grounds on which sociologists of knowledge can claim privilege for their knowledge of the sciences? Responses to the problem have varied from dismissal, through engagement with it by using the methods at hand, to the attempt to transcend it by the production of overtly reflexive theories. It is this later development which mainly constitutes the substance of this book. The essays comprise both case studies and general theoretical analyses. The non-reflexive component of Anna Wynne's study of multiple sclerosis is a fascinating account of how sufferers account for the pronouncements of doctors. The reflexive component, like the rest of the volume, is either for the dedicated (and expert) navel-watcher or the ethnographer (whether reflexive or not) of the sociologists of knowledge.

MARK WEATHERALL and HARMKE KAMMINGA, *Dynamic science: biochemistry in Cambridge 1898-1949*, Cambridge, Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 1992, pp. 86, illus., UK £4.00, Europe £4.50, elsewhere £6.00 (incl. p&p), (0-9516693-2-X).

This booklet was produced to accompany an exhibition at the School of Clinical Medicine of the University of Cambridge, and provides an introductory guide to the history of Cambridge biochemistry, focusing on the school of Sir Frederick Gowland Hopkins. Utilizing published sources and archive material relating to many individual biochemists, the text also includes discussion of both research and teaching developments, considers the role of institutes and laboratories, and incorporates several previously unpublished illustrations.

GENE FOWLER, *Crazy water: the story of Mineral Wells and other Texas health resorts*, Chisholm Trail Series No. 10, Fort Worth, Texas Christian University, 1991, distrib. Texas A & M University Press, pp. xiv, 318, illus., \$15.95 (paper, 0-87565-091-0).

If the image of European spas in the late nineteenth century was dominated by the opulent elegance of Carlsbad, the so-called "American Carlsbad", or Mineral Wells in the Palo Pinto hills of Texas, was a very different kettle of fish. Developed in the 1870s, these springs, with their high concentration of calcium, magnesium and sulphate, became folksily known as "crazy water", and the resort—often housing up to 3,000 visitors—assumed a razzmatazz air, attracting all manner of quacks, opportunist businessmen and entertainers. The star attraction became the multi-million dollar Crazy Hotel, with a rooftop ballroom. From the 1920s, Crazy Wells was notable for being the first healing springs promoted by high-pressure radio advertising. Gene Fowler's entertaining volume demonstrates that characteristically American marriage of healing, hoopla and big business that we now mainly associate not with hot springs but with Hot Gospellers.

J. B. LYONS, *The quality of Mercer's. The story of Mercer's Hospital, 1734-1991*, Dublin, Glendale Publishing Ltd., 1992, pp. 216, illus., £12.95 (0907606962).

Thank goodness for J. B. Lyons; he remains one of the few authors who continue to remind the medical history industry that there are important stories to tell about Irish medicine. In this volume he pursues the history of Mercer's Hospital in Dublin from its founding in 1734 to its closure in 1991 when it became a medical library. Mercer's archives are obviously rich and Lyons has been able to tell a detailed story illustrated with the sort of anecdotal material he so obviously enjoys. His short account of the early use of anaesthesia at the hospital, for example, is both

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informative and entertaining. As usual, Lyons has taken the trouble to leave his tracks uncovered and the footnoting is there for the serious scholar. Lyons has also discovered a new Scottish surgeon, James Symes (p. 92).

LESLEY M. WILLIAMS, *No easy path: the life and times of Lilian Violet Cooper, MD, FRACS (1861–1947), Australia's first woman surgeon*, Brisbane, Amphion Press, 1991, pp. xiv, 138, illus. (0–86776–437–6).

Clearly a woman of great determination and dedication, Lilian Cooper graduated from the London School of Medicine for Women in 1890. The following year she left England to work in Brisbane, Australia. There she became the first woman medical practitioner registered in Queensland, and the second in Australia, she was also the first to have a consultancy at an Australian hospital (the Hospital for Sick Children, Brisbane) and to be awarded the Fellowship of the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons.

JOAN LANE *Worcester Infirmary in the eighteenth century*, Occasional Publications 6, Worcester Historical Society, 1992 (obtainable from R. Whittaker, St Helen's Record Office, Fish Street, Worcester, WR1 2HW), pp. 44, £4.75 (+ 50p p&p), (ISSN 0140–9913).

As this information-packed pamphlet clearly shows, the Worcester Infirmary, launched in 1745, might be taken as typifying the wave of county hospital foundations in Georgian England. Notable impetus and lasting support came from polite society, landowners and clergy in particular (about one-fifth of subscribers were men of the cloth), and civic pride long remained a powerful incentive to donors. Joan Lane convincingly shows how the infirmary proved an economic asset to Worcester, not merely by helping the sick poor to recover their breadwinning capacity, but also by providing extensive employment for local tradesmen, builders, provisions-merchants, and so forth, many of whom could then be persuaded to become subscribers. The number of substantial legacies from ladies is a marked feature of the early history of the infirmary. Of the medical side, less can be said, owing to the destruction of records, but the low death rate up to 1800 adds further confirmation to the refutation of the "gateways to death" interpretation of the Georgian hospital.

JOHN SURTEES, *Barracks, workhouse and hospital: St. Mary's, Eastbourne 1794–1990*, Eastbourne Local History Society, 1992, pp. 160, illus., £5.25 (0–9504560–4–7).

St Mary's, Eastbourne, closed in 1990 after a long and varied history. Not only did it evolve from barracks to hospital, but also the hospital itself went through changes including, inevitably, adapting to the National Health Service, and it finally became a geriatric hospital. John Surtees has used contemporary documents and newspaper reports, as well as many personal recollections and anecdotes from the First World War until the present to good effect in this account.

ROY M. ACHESON, *Wickliffe Rose of the Rockefeller Foundation: 1862–1914, the formative years*, Cambridge, Killycarn Press (P.O. Box 387, Cambridge CB1 2PT), 1992, pp. viii, 99, £12.50, \$17.50 (incl. postage, 0–9518908–0–8).

This is an unreferenced first instalment of what is promised as a full-scale biography of Wickliffe Rose, who was instrumental in shaping much of the policy relating to the Rockefeller support of medical research, medical education and public health in the early twentieth century.

W. F. HENDRIE and D. A. D. MACLEOD, *The Bangour Story: a history of Bangour Village and General Hospitals*, Aberdeen University Press, 1991 pp. xiv, 234, illus., £12.95 (hardback, 0–08–041402–8), £6.95 (paperback, 0–08–041401–X).

Bangour Village Hospital was established in 1906 by the Edinburgh District Lunacy Board, while Bangour General Hospital opened in 1939 to meet wartime emergency needs. The undoubted strength of this history is the extensive, though uncritical, use of oral testimony,

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much of which illuminates the realities of hospital life. Like many of the genre, however, it suffers through a failure to set local developments in a wider context. There are also some glaring anachronisms, notably the claim that Bangour was still functioning as a “pauper lunatic asylum” in 1956 (p. 163). Overall, the authors are to be congratulated on recording the past in a manner which will be of considerable value to future historians.

GUNDOLF KEIL and PAUL SCHNITZER (eds), *Das Lorscher Arzneibuch und die frühmittelalterliche Medizin: Verhandlungen des medizinhistorischen Symposiums im September 1989 in Lorsch*, Lorsch, Verlag Laurissa, 1991, pp. 311, DM 24 (3-922781-74-8).

The Lorsch *Book of medicine*, formerly known as the Bamberg Codex from its modern home, the Bamberg Staatliche Bibliothek, is the earliest medical text to survive from Germany. It was written around 790 at the monastery of Lorsch (between Frankfurt and Heidelberg), and contains a series of dietetic, astrological, pharmacological, and deontological texts in Latin (with a few glosses in German). These learned essays set it in a variety of contexts—Late Antique pharmacology, monastic medicine, the monastery of Lorsch itself, and the whole development of medieval medicine, both early and late. There are general surveys as well as specific discussions of individual sections of the codex. An important parallel is provided by Bernhard Bischoff's publication, pp. 123–8, of previously unknown fragments of a manuscript of “popular medicine” written around 810 at the abbey of Fulda (Hesse), with which Lorsch had close contacts. For those with German, this can be warmly recommended as a sound and relatively inexpensive guide to early medieval medicine.

FELIX DRIVER and GILLIAN ROSE (eds), *Nature and science: essays in the history of geographical knowledge*, Historical Geography Research series No. 28, Bristol, Historical Geography Research Group, 1992, pp. vi, 79, illus. (1-870074-10-6).

This slim volume presents a collection of essays drawn from seminar papers given to the London Group of Historical Geographers. Their focus is the history of modern scientific thinking about the natural world. Medical historians will be interested mainly in essays by Ludmilla Jordanova, on ‘Environmentalism in the Eighteenth Century’, and by Roy Porter, on ‘Medicine, the Human Sciences and the Environment in the Enlightenment’. Jordanova offers a number of ideas about eighteenth-century environmentalism, which she examines by way of Lamarck's biological thinking, and of contemporary views on the family. Porter is concerned more particularly with the role of medicine (“deeply ambiguous”) in the emerging field of the sciences of man. David Livingstone's piece on the scientific sources of racial geography, which in turn provided a foundation for racial politics, is a bonus. All the essays are intended both to contribute to a new history of geography, and to stimulate current thinking about people and nature.

BOOKS ALSO RECEIVED

(The inclusion of a title does not preclude the possibility of subsequent review. Items received, other than those assigned for review, are ultimately incorporated into the collection of the Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine.)

MARGARET BRAZIER, *Medicine, patients and the law*, London and New York, Penguin Books, 1992, second edition, pp. xxv, 495, £9.99 (paperback 0-14-012749-6).

WILBERT M. GESLER and THOMAS C. RICKETTS (eds), *Health in rural north America: the geography of health care services and delivery*, New Brunswick, NJ, and London, Rutgers University Press, 1992, pp. xiii, 314, \$37.00 (hardback 0-8135-1759-1), \$17.00 (paperback, 0-1835-1760-5).