

## HISTORY OF MEDICINE SPRING TERM 2012 SEMINAR SERIES

College of Medical & Dental Sciences  
School of Health & Population Sciences  
University of Birmingham

Seminars will be held at 5.30pm in Room  
WF38 (First Floor) of the Medical School  
(Note 16 Feb is in room LT4)



<p>Thursday 19 January <b>CANCELLED</b> Revised date tbc</p>	<p><b>Keir Waddington (Cardiff University)</b> 'in a country every way by nature favourable to health': landscape and public health in Rural Wales</p>
<p>Thursday 2 February</p>	<p><b>Jennifer Wallis (Queen Mary, University of London)</b> 'Dr Mercier's instrument: The problem of pathological knowledge in the asylum' c1880 - 1905</p>
<p>Thursday 16 February <b>** Note : Room LT4**</b></p>	<p><b>Tania Kausmally (UCL)</b> 'William Hewson and the Craven Street Anatomy School (1772-1778) – An archaeological perspective'</p>
<p>Thursday 1 March</p>	<p><b>Steve King (University of Leicester)</b> 'The NHS as an unsustainable legacy cost? Patients' rights and the duties of doctors and the state 1700s to 2012'</p>
<p>Thursday 15 March</p>	<p><b>John Christie (University of Leeds, University of Oxford, University of Warwick)</b> 'Agonism And Emulation: Medical Student Cultures in C18th Edinburgh'</p>



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**Thursday 19 January**

**CANCELLED – Revised Date To Be Advised**

**Keir Waddington (Cardiff University)**

'in a country every way by nature favourable to health':  
landscape and public health in Rural Wales

***ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND***

Details of future seminars and the work of the Unit are available from:  
Dr Jonathan Reinartz, Director, History of Medicine Unit, College of Medical & Dental Sciences,  
University of Birmingham. B15 2TT  
Email: [j.reinartz@bham.ac.uk](mailto:j.reinartz@bham.ac.uk) Tel: 0121 415 8122

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**Thursday 2 February 2012**

**Jennifer Wallis (Queen Mary, University of London)**

**'Dr Mercier's instrument: The problem of pathological knowledge in the asylum' c 1880-1905**

In 1893, partly in response to allegations of mistreatment within British asylums, Dr Charles Mercier devised an instrument with which to measure 'the breaking strain of ribs' at post mortem. While the notion of asylum patients having peculiarly fragile bones was not entirely novel at this time, Mercier's desire to investigate the issue in this way was noteworthy. He distributed the instrument to a number of British asylums and hospitals, including the West Riding Asylum where pathological research had been regularly pursued for some years.

By the early twentieth century, however 'just ten years after Mercier's device appeared' the details the instrument provided (such as 'convex' and 'concave' breaking strain) ceased to be recorded at post mortem. This paper examines the experiments undertaken at the West Riding using Mercier's apparatus in order to address wider issues surrounding pathological research within the asylum: the dialogue between asylum pathologists, the desire to quantify bodily fabric, and the utility of post mortem research more widely.

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**Tania Kausmally (UCL)**

**‘William Hewson and the Craven Street Anatomy  
School (1772-1778) – An archaeological perspective’**

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**Steve King (University of Leicester)**

**'The NHS as an unsustainable legacy cost? Patients' rights and  
the duties of doctors and the state 1700s to 2012'**

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**John Christie**

**(University of Leeds, University of Oxford, University of Warwick)**

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Medical Student Cultures in C18th Edinburgh'**

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