



**BRITISH SOCIETY for the HISTORY of  
PAEDIATRICS and CHILD HEALTH**  
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**AUTUMN MEETING 2016**  
**Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> - Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> September**  
**British Society for the  
History of Paediatrics & Child Health**  
**With the Centre for the Study of Play and Recreation**  
**University of Greenwich**  
**Maritime Campus**

## Programme

### Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> September

12.30 pm onwards registration

Exhibits from the “Multi-Cultural Toys” project, Centre for the Study of Play and Recreation, University of Greenwich

1.00 pm Lunch

1.45 pm **Chair Professor Euan Ross** (King’s College, London)

Professor Timothy Peters (Ironbridge Institute, University of Birmingham)

**“The Life and Times of James 6<sup>th</sup> of Scotland and 1st of England”**

2.35 pm **panel session**, “Hospitals and diseases”

Nick Baldwin, (GOSH) **“Charles West Revisited”**

Professor John Walker-Smith, (University of London)

**“Two Lost Children’s Hospitals of East London: an Oscar Wilde Story”**

Professor Peter Dunn, (University of Bristol) **“The Rise and Fall of Childbed Fever”**.

Dr Philip Mortimer, **“What undermined whooping cough (pertussis) vaccination programmes in the 1970s?”**

4.30 pm tea and coffee

**Chair Nick Baldwin** (GOSH)

4.50 pm Dr Ruth Richardson (Independent historian, with affiliation to King’s College, London, University of Cambridge) **“A Century before Bolam, A Girl, a Fall, a Lock-Ward and her Father”**,

5.30 pm AGM

### Saturday September 3<sup>rd</sup>

9.30 am. **panel session, Children’s growth, child care and wellbeing**

**Chair Dr Jonathan Dossetor**

Dr Eric Schneider (LSE), **“The Economics and Biology of Shifting Growth: the Growth Pattern of British Children, 1850-1979”** (written with Dr Pei Gao)

Dr Mary Clare Martin (University of Greenwich) **“Toys, Health and Wellbeing”**

10.30 am **Cadogan lecture** Helen Franklin, (IHR) **“Truby King and Benjamin Spock”**

11.00 am Richard Bates, (Warwick) **“Parenting advice and post-war political ideology: Benjamin Spock and Françoise Dolto”**

11.30 am. tea and coffee

**Chair Dr Mary Clare Martin** (University of Greenwich)

12.00 Professor Shurlee Swain (Australian National University) , **“A historian looks at child abuse”**

1.00 Lunch

## Abstracts

**Professor Timothy Peters** (Ironbridge Institute, University of Birmingham)

### **The Life and Times of James 6th of Scotland and 1st of England**

*In the first three years of James's English rule, each of the great problems of the coming century took an irrevocable turn... all the main causes that twice combined to drive the Stuarts from the throne were in three fatal years set in motion by an overwise King.*

George Trevelyan. England under the Stuarts (Twenty-first edition). London; Methuen & Co.: 1949.

It has been claimed that King James VI/I, an antecedent of King George III, suffered from acute porphyria, and that the disease was passed on to George III through James's granddaughter Sophie, mother of George I. The life of James and previously-proposed diagnoses are considered. James's medical history is reviewed in detail and, where possible, examined with validated symptom scales.

Applying SimulConsult, an online database of neurological diseases, no evidence was found to support a diagnosis of acute porphyria or any of the other postulated diagnostic claims. Surprisingly the results show that James's symptomatology is compatible with a diagnosis of Attenuated (mild) Lesch-Nyhan disease. In addition, there is evidence of associated Asperger traits which may explain some of the King's unusual behavioural and psycho-social features.

**Nick Baldwin** (archivist, Great Ormond Street hospital)

### **Charles West Revisited**

The recent Bicentenary of Dr. Charles West (born August 8th 1816) provides an opportunity to look again at his career.

West had already acquired extensive experience of both women's and children's health issues at a variety of institutions, both in Britain and overseas, prior to the opening of the Hospital for Sick Children at Great Ormond Street. He accumulated a substantial library of European literature on child health, and added to it with his own extensive publications and lectures on childhood illness, bringing the work of the more advanced Paediatric scene in Continental Europe to a British audience. He successfully established and developed Britain's first exclusively Paediatric hospital with in-patient facilities at Great Ormond Street, culminating in the opening of its first purpose-built building in 1875. His innovations there included the establishment of a medical museum at his own expense, with plaster & wax casts of patients produced by local specialists, and the 'Infant Nursery', one of the first crèches for working mothers in London. However, by the time of the new building's opening his views on Hospital management, and especially nursing management, were increasingly clashing with those of the Hospital's Board of Governors, becoming entangled with personal issues and culminating in his resignation in 1877. He spent much of his later career in France, where he continued to publish and debate on child health matters. His work at Great Ormond Street was to a degree a family business, with his wife and children also having involvement.

**Professor John Walker Smith**

### **Two Lost Children's Hospitals of London: a Connection with Oscar Wilde**

In 1866 the Victoria Hospital for Children was opened in Tite Street, London. This was the second children's hospital to be founded in London. It was closed in 1964. Great Ormond St. Hospital was the first. It was founded in 1852, the first in Britain and it flourishes to this day. Victoria Hospital was closed in 1964 and Queen's in 1998.

There is a link with Oscar Wilde. He lived directly opposite to the Victoria Hospital and his children's room looked directly over the hospital. His son recalled "horrific processions to the hospital". Oscar Wilde's study was in the shadow of the hospital within the "sound of crying sick children".

In 1885 in a book entitled "In a Good cause" Baroness Tyssen-Amherst published a collection of stories and poems in aid of the North-eastern Children's hospital, being in desperate need of financial report. Various items were contributed. Oscar Wilde contributed a poem: "Le Jardin des Tuileries" autographed by him. The poem describes children playing in the Parisian gardens. It concluded

"A cruel tree! If I were you  
And children climbed me, for their sake  
Though it would be winter I would break  
Into Spring blossoms white and blue!"

This anticipated his children's story "The Selfish Giant" which he first told to his own children in Tite Street.

Prior to the NHS, these two hospitals depended upon voluntary financial support. Distinguished people including royalty (in case of Queen's) and the aristocracy as well as famous figures such as Oscar Wilde assisted in fund raising activities such as the book above.

These two hospitals at first made significant progress under the NHS, no longer dependant on precarious financial support. However NHS policy was to associate the care of children more closely with the work of large general hospitals. So in 1964 Victoria Hospital was closed and its activities transferred to newly built St. George's Tooting.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital secured its future for a time, by integrating with Great Ormond St. as the Hospitals for Sick Children as well as with paediatric departments at Barts and the Royal London, including teaching of medical students. However following the Tomlinson Report's recommendations it was closed in 1998. Its activities were transferred to the Royal London with outpatient activities at Homerton Hospital.

There have been no published long term outcomes of the effect of these two closures upon paediatric care in London or upon paediatric teaching and training of doctors.

**Professor Peter Dunn** (University of Bristol)

### **The Rise and Fall of Childbed Fever**

Childbed fever, also known as puerperal fever or sepsis, has been a scourge of childbirth throughout the ages. With the creation of maternity hospitals in the 18th and 19th centuries, this disease reached epidemic proportions and became the major cause of maternal mortality. The course of the disease over more than 2000 years will be followed through the contributions of a number of doctors, scientists and others, commencing with Hippocrates and concluding with Professor Howard Florey. The slow decline of the disease commenced in the 18th century with Charles White and Alexander Gordon's recognition that the condition was highly contagious. However the profession was very slow to accept this fact and it required the observations of Oliver Wendell Holmes and Ignaz Semmelweis fifty to one hundred years later for it to be reluctantly persuaded. Eventually improved hygiene, isolation of patients, sterilisation and finally the use of chemotherapy and antibiotics finally won the day in the 20th century.

**Philip Mortimer**

### **What undermined whooping cough (pertussis) vaccination programmes in the 1970s?**

Whooping cough is-or at least used to be-one of the most distressing illnesses of infancy. Recurrent bouts of coughing and respiratory distress were accompanied by vomiting and with it failure to thrive. Some affected infants died.

The pertussis vaccines developed in North America in the 1930s were introduced into UK in the 1950s and, when given to children, were relatively effective especially in preventing the older children from infecting sibling infants.

Unfortunately, retrospective studies published in the 1970s from London and Glasgow associated pertussis vaccine with constitutional effects and occasional permanent neurological damage, and it was not until the early 1980s that it was established that those fears were largely unfounded. During that interval UK vaccine acceptance rates fell from about 90% to about 35%, and lesser falls were seen in several other countries. As a result whooping cough incidence rose and some infants died.

The question has since arisen: *'What really caused the side effects associated with pertussis vaccine?'* Some of the vaccine reactions observed were probably due to co-incident infection with HHV6/7, closely related herpes viruses first described in 1981 and both very common in infancy.

Even today intercurrent virus infections, whether identified or not, may cause reactions that are then attributed to one of the growing number of vaccinations now routinely given in infancy and childhood. Such viruses still have the potential to disrupt immunisation programmes.

**Dr Ruth Richardson** (Independent Historian, affiliations with King's College London, University of Cambridge, the Gordon Museum, Hong Kong University)

### **A Century before Bolam: a Girl, a Fall, a Lock-Ward and her Father**

Histories of medical negligence in Britain generally make an ungainly leap from the "do no harm" of Hippocrates to the end of the nineteenth century. But here is a case, a century before Bolam (1957) in which doctors were called to account in court for the negligent/careless treatment of a young girl. Her life had been given up after a catalogue of appallingly bad events which took place in a London charitable hospital. Her father had other ideas, and took on the hospital establishment afterwards. This is a story of an accident in a slum neighbourhood, charitable care which went badly wrong-poor doctoring, poor nursing-and valiant working class parenthood. The child survived, brought back from the brink of death thanks to a contrasting medical and nursing regime in another institution. The legal

case-which seems to be path-breaking-was lost, but doctors were put on notice that even poor children had articulate and determined champions. The story has important implications for the growth of children's hospital provision, the impact of Miss Nightingale, and the long Victorian delay in the acceptance of germ theory.

**Dr Eric Schneider and Dr Pei Gao** (LSE) This research was made possible through an ESRC future research leader grant (ES/L010267/1).

**The Economics and Biology of Shifting Growth: the Growth Pattern of British Children, 1850-1975**

The growth pattern of British children has changed substantially over the past 120 years (Cameron, 1979). Children in the late nineteenth century grew at a slower velocity, experienced a delayed pubertal growth spurt, and grew for longer than children today. Based on three new datasets covering nearly 30,000 children, this paper reconstructs precise changes in the growth pattern between the 1850s and the 1970s, and explores factors influencing those changes. Although this shift of growth pattern has been described in general terms using cross-sectional growth profiles, this paper provides the first dynamic study using individual-level data. Two datasets are drawn from training ship records containing boys' longitudinal growth between the ages of 10 and 16 spanning the 1850s to 1970s. These long-run measures are supplemented with four cross-sectional datasets covering a wide range of ages and both sexes as cross checks for results' validity (the new North Surrey School District dataset, 1865-92, the West London School District dataset, 1908-15, the Boyd Orr Cohort, 1937-9 and the 1958 National Childhood Development Study). After describing the changing growth pattern controlling for individual characteristics, we will further explore these characteristics. We hypothesize that parental social status, the disease environment, and family size are important variables in explaining the changing growth pattern.

**Dr Mary Clare Martin** (University of Greenwich)

**Toys, Health and Wellbeing in global perspective, 1800-1870**

Research on identity has shown the damaging effect of all-white role models on black children. Yet work in the 1960s to 1980s to create diverse learning and play opportunities and materials apparently stalled in Britain after the Education Reform Act of 1988 and National Curriculum of the 1990s, with the development of a more target-driven and instrumental education system and the decline of progressivism.

This paper will draw on an unusual range of sources, the memoirs of nineteenth century overseas missionaries, to demonstrate the similarities in social interaction and play experiences between missionaries and indigenous children in global context from 1800 to 1870. It will show, first how the rhetoric of mixing between races was used by missionaries to enhance the evangelising project, through claiming that contact between children created bonds of trust even between peoples of different racial origins and dissimilar life-styles. It will then explore children's experiences of differing kinds of play, including imaginative play, play with natural materials, child-made playthings and commercially manufactured toys. It will challenge the orthodoxy that nineteenth century children's play was gendered, as well as arguments that missionaries wished to separate their own from indigenous children.

This historical research has a broader significance. If indigenous and European children in the nineteenth century could play with similar materials and games, some modelled on indigenous practices, why is so little attempt made to provide culturally diverse play experiences and toys in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries? Currently, the global toy market is dominated by a few western-oriented companies which provides most children with a very limited range of possibilities.

**Helen Franklin**, PhD candidate, Institute of Historical Research, London

**The Cadogan lecture will be entitled "Truby King and Benjamin Spock"**

This lecture will reflect on the influences of two popular childcare manuals on parenting in Britain during the first half of the twentieth century. It will discuss the contrasting ways in which two authors, Dr Truby King and Dr Spock, advised and indeed regarded the role of the parent in infant care through their books. This paper will also reveal some of the attitudes of parents using these manuals towards the authors. It will argue that the principles behind Truby King's infant care are now viewed somewhat negatively, as such, his influence on infant care practices has been less enduring than Spock's. This paper is relevant to the historiography of child health and welfare in terms of the changing medical interest in children during this period, known as the 'movement from bodies to minds'.

**Richard Bates**, PhD candidate, University of Nottingham

**Parenting advice and postwar political ideology: Benjamin Spock and Françoise Dolto**

In the USA between 1950 and 2000, only the Bible outsold Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care* (1946). Drawing on sources from Freud to Dewey, Spock re-imagined parenting for a society that consciously valued individual freedom over collective discipline. In 1970s-1980s France, a similar role of public parenting expert was played by Françoise Dolto (1908-1988). Like Spock's, her radio broadcasts and books redefined what constituted 'common sense' child-rearing.

This paper will examine the intellectual resemblances between Dolto and Spock, before comparing the different political inflections of their work in their national contexts. US conservatives blamed Spock for 1960s permissiveness; his response took him ever further to the political left. Dolto's political legacy is complex, shaped by her Catholic, Pétainist background and the cultural ramifications of May 1968. How do political concepts like freedom, autonomy, radicalism seep into everyday child-rearing dilemmas? What can parenting attitudes tell us about broader societal ideologies? Is there a connection between the 'psychologisation' of western society and the spread of democratic politics

**Professor Shurlee Swain** (Australian Catholic University)

**A historian looks at child sexual abuse**

The emergence of the term child sexual abuse in the last quarter of the twentieth century represents an attempt to name or re-label behaviours which had been seen as troubling for a much longer period. Over the last two decades the concept has captured a central place in public discourse and is the focus of major inquiries not only in Australia but in the United Kingdom and across Northern Europe, displacing broader concerns about the prevalence of all types of abuse in out of home care. This paper will explore the long history of behaviours now encapsulated within the concept of child sexual abuse, investigating the blurred boundaries between agency and exploitation, innocence and culpability which any attempt to label or categorise inevitably involves.

Drawing on newspaper and archival evidence it will trace the history of sexual abuse back into the nineteenth century and ask why it took so long for survivors to have their stories heard, arguing that while institutional responses to allegations of sexual abuse remained remarkably consistent over time the discourses through which survivors could understand and articulate their experiences were much later to develop. Without access to a language through which to position themselves as victims of rather than complicit in such abusive behaviours survivors were ill-equipped to resist the attempts by those in authority to silence their complaint. The paper will argue that the constructions of childhood that prevailed until at least the 1970s constrained the development of discourses through which underage sexual experiences could be named and discussed, limiting the available speaking positions and delaying the development of preventive, protective and reparative responses to what has emerged in the current context as a major social issue.

**Biography:** Shurlee Swain is Professor of Humanities at Australian Catholic University, a Fellow of the Academy of the Social Sciences in Australia and the historian chief investigator on Australia's Find & Connect Web Resource project ([www.findandconnect.gov.au/](http://www.findandconnect.gov.au/)) funded by the Federal Government as part of the apology to Former Child Migrants and other children who grew up in out-of-home care. Her undergraduate studies at the University of Melbourne were in the areas of history and social work and her subsequent research has been located at the intersection of these two disciplinary fields. Professor Swain has published widely in the area of child and family welfare history and her research has informed government inquiries into the history of abuse in out-of-home care, and of forced adoptions and, most recently the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Australia. Recent publications include *The Market in Babies: Stories of Australian Adoption* (Monash University Publishing, 2013) and *Apologies and the Legacy of Out-of-Home 'Care'* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), co-edited with Johanna Sköld, as well as articles published in the *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* (2015), *The Public Historian* (2014) and *Women's History Review* (2014).