College Archives update

Archives on-line catalogue
The creation of an on-line catalogue of College archives is in progress. The catalogue can now be accessed via the Archives Hub and AIM25 websites. The creation of the catalogue is an ongoing exercise aimed at making the archives collection more readily accessible to staff, Members and Fellows of the College, the research community and the public.

Photo Library
The Archivist is currently involved in creating a College Photo-Library. He is appealing to all members of staff who organise events like conferences and meetings to submit photographs of these events so that they could be included in the College Photo-Library. The photographs can either be prints or electronic images. They should be accompanied by a full description of the event or the name and position of the Member if it is a portrait photograph.

Digitisation of the Journal of Mental Science/British Journal of Psychiatry Supplements (1936-1977)
The scanning and digitisation of the remainder of the supplements (1936-19770) was carried out recently. From 1853 until 1977 the minutes of annual, quarterly and divisional meetings were compiled and published as supplements. In 2000 when the College launched the on-line edition of the Journal of Mental Science and the British Journal of Psychiatry, only supplements from 1853 to 1935 were included in the on-line edition. These supplements contain the core details of the earliest history of the College. The supplements will be available soon.

Puzzle Corner
The following photograph is from the photographic collection of the Archives. It is marked “unidentified”.

This seems to be an Annual Dinner of some kind, but the Honorary Archivist is unable to identify anyone. Can anyone help with the identification of the occasion or any of the guests? Please contact the Archivist.

Military Psychiatry: a significant contribution or a worthless distraction?
On Wednesday, 23 May 2012, Professor Edgar Jones, Professor of the History of Medicine and Psychiatry, King’s Centre for Military Health Research, gave a fascinating and very well attended talk on the history of English military psychiatry in the two World Wars. This was part of the College’s prestigious evening lecture series
had expected. I decided to go back to the literature review became a larger task than I on evidence based their personal journeys in the NHS and their views involved interviewing child psychotherapists about a historical literature review and the second phase of the project was in two phases. The first phase was understand how it survived in the evidence driven psychoanalytic psychotherapy in order to to the decision to explore the history of child machinations of the NHS. The idea for the project started as his trainee) and a project plan. My supervisor suggested using required an information sheet for the narrators and a project plan. My supervisor suggested using research ethics committee. Ethical approval also research supervisor who joint authored a paper just after I had started the second phase of the project, which was a series of interviews with child psychotherapists who had worked at least five years in the NHS. My contacts from my history of psychotherapy through the latter half of the twentieth century. Earlier papers and books were not easily available but the challenge of finding them seemed to excite various NHS librarians, with the British Library being the ultimate port of call. This is a fantastic resource which I hope never becomes subject to public sector cuts. The story of child psychotherapy is truly international and I had to decide how to limit my borders, as I confined my search to papers in the English language. The story in the States seemed to be important so I included some American literature. My public health training led me to worry about bias in my selection of studies, but then I remembered my teaching from the MSc which highlighted that all scientific work is socially constructed. I felt I would need to declare as much about my own biases, particularly when it came to recruiting narrators for the second phase of the project. I lost count of how many drafts of the literature review found themselves in the recycling bin and I am really grateful to several eminent scholars who took the time to read it, some of whom were recruited via the College Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference in Harrogate where I presented a poster in 2005 (3). This article describes my experience of self generated research whilst training in Manchester (UK) as a child psychiatrist. I trained in the early noughties so had the luxury of a day a week in my specialist training to embark on my own research. Undertaking an oral history project offered me the chance to develop further research at low cost, because no support funding was available. I was fortunate in many ways. I had already studied for an MSc in the History of Medicine, so I had some basic skills and contacts. My previous training in public health also helped- I had a fair idea about what could be achieved in one day a week. Support came from various quarters: a trainer who encouraged me to start the project before being appointed on the specialist scheme, an enthusiastic professor (who sadly died just after I had started as his trainee) and a research supervisor who joint authored a paper and kept me going when things were getting stuck.

I learnt so much from this research. Interviewing child psychoanalytic psychotherapists was truly enriching and a great antidote to the bureaucratic machinations of the NHS. The idea for the project developed from my MSc dissertation. I had studied the influences on the processes whereby therapeutic interventions become obsolete (1, 2). In particular I was interested in why interventions without a strong evidence base still live on. A discussion with the late Professor Harrington led to the decision to explore the history of child psychoanalytic psychotherapy in order to understand how it survived in the evidence driven commissioning culture of the early 21st Century. The project was in two phases. The first phase was a historical literature review and the second phase involved interviewing child psychotherapists about their personal journeys in the NHS and their views on evidence based practice.

The literature review became a larger task than I had expected. I decided to go back to the inception of the NHS in 1948 and follow the story of the development of child psychoanalytic psychotherapy through the latter half of the twentieth century. Earlier papers and books were not easily available but the challenge of finding them seemed to excite various NHS librarians, with the British Library being the ultimate port of call. This is a fantastic resource which I hope never becomes subject to public sector cuts. The story of child psychotherapy is truly international and I had to decide how to limit my borders, as I confined my search to papers in the English language. The story in the States seemed to be important so I included some American literature. My public health training led me to worry about bias in my selection of studies, but then I remembered my teaching from the MSc which highlighted that all scientific work is socially constructed. I felt I would need to declare as much about my own biases, particularly when it came to recruiting narrators for the second phase of the project. I lost count of how many drafts of the literature review found themselves in the recycling bin and I am really grateful to several eminent scholars who took the time to read it, some of whom were recruited via the College Child and Adolescent Psychiatry conference in Harrogate where I presented a poster in 2005 (3).

Finding the right journal for the article produced from the literature review was challenging. Rejections were based on the work not being suitable for the journal in question rather than because of the quality of the work. Finally it was accepted by ‘History of Psychiatry ’ and published in 2009 (4). This journal still gave free copies of the journal to authors and it feels good to have the hard copy.

Whilst I was submitting the literature review for publication I started the second phase of the project, which was a series of interviews with child psychotherapists who had worked at least five years in the NHS. My contacts from my history of medicine course put me in touch with the North West Sound Archive who lent me the sound equipment for the interviews, gave me training and agreed to archive the content of the project. I had to include consent to the archiving as part of the consent form that was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee. Ethical approval also required an information sheet for the narrators and a project plan. My supervisor suggested using his NHS Trust as the host Trust for the project because I was moving jobs during my rotation. As the project didn’t involve patients or use of NHS databases for recruitment, I had a smooth run
through the ethical approval process and the Trust research approval process, always useful in a short term project.

During my training I had been supervised for a psychoanalytical case by a child psychotherapist in Manchester and he was my first interviewee. He suggested a number of child psychotherapists to interview and I used a ‘snowballing’ technique for recruiting my sample, whereby narrators suggested other interviewers as I went along. The professor of child psychiatry kindly wrote me a letter of introduction on University headed notepaper, which I sent to psychotherapists I was trying to recruit. I funded my own travel from the pay for extra hours I was working as a junior on call.

Half through the interviews I undertook a consultant locum and my precious research day evolved into an hour a week. Actually this was a generous concession in my locum consultant job plan by our then lead consultant. So I took annual leave to complete the interviews. It was worth every minute of my leave and every penny spent on train fares. I have never met such an inspiring group of people as my narrators. I shall always remember the psychotherapist who welcomed me to her flat in Hampstead and gave me biscuits and tea, while telling me about the nursery she still visited weekly in retirement at the age of 86. I hope I am that active in retirement!

They told me stories of their early financial struggles when they were training because there were no funded training places and they had to pay for their analysis. They spoke fondly of benefactors, mentors and supervisors and the challenging children they treated. I was transported back to campaigns for inclusion in the NHS and pioneering incremental development of child psychotherapy across the country. I was humbled by the sagas of critical psychiatrists and unhelpful psychologists, but warmed by tales of individuals from all professions who were supportive and opened doors.

In particular, I was impressed by their explanations of the political context of evidence based practice and the narrowness of the knowledge base that would be approved by commissioning organisations which I had once been part of. Somehow the NHS had become ruled by a socially constructed evidence hierarchy that had arisen from methods that were used to test pharmaceuticals. Deciding what ‘knowledge’ is ‘good knowledge’ has become an industry and ‘lack of evidence’ was being used as a weapon to cut services.

Initially I transcribed the interviews using voice activated software, but this was laborious. Eventually I used a transcribing agency and one of my mentors submitted a bid to a charitable fund to help me with the costs of this. My supervisor and I then separately analysed the transcripts for themes and drafted the article which was published at the beginning of 2011(5). Finding a journal this time was easier as one of my narrators suggested a journal that had previously published his research.

This was a long project; it started in 2004. Any funding body would have lost patience with me on such time scales. Although I did achieve the outcome of publication which was my initial goal, the benefits for me personally were greater than can be reflected in a paper output. In addition our CAMHS department has just received its first child psychoanalytic psychotherapist in training as a result of my interest in the field, getting psychoanalytic thinking into parts of the NHS not previously reached.

E. Rous, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Stockport Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust

References

From the Archives

Extract from "Notes of Clinical Lectures on Insanity delivered at the Hanwell Asylum in 1848 by Dr Conolly and Dr Hitchman."

The picture is of "a bed of peculiar construction" with an obvious purpose.

International Congress of the Royal College of Psychiatrists

Psychiatry: Medicine and the Future
Arena and Convention Centre, Liverpool, 10-13 July 2012
Session S59, 16.15-17.30, Friday 13 July

Tracing views of mental illness: new research into the history of psychiatry and neurology

Chair: Dr Fiona Subotsky, Honorary Archivist, Royal College of Psychiatrists

- Neuropsychiatry in Babylon
  Dr EH Reynolds, Consultant Neurologist and Honorary Senior Lecturer, Institute of Epileptology, King’s College, London

- What is erotomania? The life and death of Dr De Clérambault
  Professor Raymond Levy, Emeritus Professor, Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College, London

- ‘Neuro-Psychiatry’ (1943): a medical documentary film of treatment at Mill Hill Hospital or wartime propaganda?
  Professor Edgar Jones, Professor of the History of Medicine, Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London.

Adopt-a-Book

Adopting a book from the College’s Antiquarian Collection offers an opportunity to contribute towards the history and development of psychiatry. The scheme has enabled more than 30 books to be restored since its inception in 2007. The College would like to thank Members who have donated to the scheme. Further information about the scheme can be found at: http://rcpsych.ac.uk/rollofhonour/thecollegearchives/adoptabook.aspx

Contributions to the newsletter

Brief articles, letters and notices of events are welcome. Please send contributions to the Archivist, Royal College of Psychiatrists, 17 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PG.