



Asylum for Criminal Lunatics, Broadmoor, Berkshire. Credit: [Wellcome Collection](#). [CC BY](#)

## HISTORY OF PSYCHIATRY SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

### ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF FORENSIC PSYCHIATRY

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 1.30-5.15pm  
 Room 1.1, RCPsych, 21 Prescot St, E1 8BB

#### Programme



| Time      | Session   |
|-----------|---|
| 1.30-1.45 | Registration and coffee   |
| 1.45-3.15 | <p><b>Chair: Professor Sonu Shamdasani</b></p> <p><b>Dr Harvey Gordon</b><br/>           The interface between general and forensic psychiatry: An historical perspective: Bethlem, Broadmoor and the local asylums in the 19th century</p> <p><b>Ms Alison Pedley</b><br/> <i>'She looked very wild, no doubt she was insane'</i>: Maternal child murder, criminal lunacy and the asylum in nineteenth-century England</p>   |
| 3.15-3.45 | Tea / coffee  |
| 3.45-5.15 | <p><b>Chair: Professor Sonu Shamdasani</b></p> <p><b>Professor John Gunn</b><br/>           Trick-cycling through the underworld<br/>           My role in forensic psychiatry: an overview of 50 years of academic forensic psychiatry by an emeritus professor of forensic psychiatry</p> <p><b>Dr Claire Veldmeijer</b><br/>           A historical overview of admissions to Surrey County Lunatic Asylum, 1863-1867</p> <p><b>Ms Jimena Seara Prieto</b><br/>           Psychiatry and the Third Reich</p> |
| 17.15     | Close   |

### **Professor Sonu Shamdasani (chair)**

Sonu Shamdasani is Professor of Jung History in the School of European Languages, Culture and Society and co-directs the UCL Health Humanities Centre and Health Humanities MA. He works on the history of psychology and psychiatry. His research follows two intersecting vertices: the reconstruction of the formation of modern psychological disciplines and therapeutics from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, and a reconstruction of the formation of work of Jung, based on primary archival materials. Among numerous works, he is the author of *CG Jung: A Biography in Books* and editor and co-translator of *CG Jung's The Red Book: Liber Novus*.

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### **The interface between general and forensic psychiatry**

#### **An historical perspective: Bethlem, Broadmoor and the local asylums in the 19th century**

The year 1800, the end of the 18th and onset of the 19th century, marked the beginning of the new notion of the criminal lunatic. But was the criminal lunatic a criminal, a lunatic, a hybrid of both, or neither? During the 19th century aspects of the State came increasingly to provide facilities for the detention and treatment of lunatics and criminal lunatics. The private sector also played a role. Bethlem, the oldest mental hospital in Britain and in Europe, opened a criminal lunatic wing in 1816, then closed it – indeed demolished it – in 1864 when Broadmoor opened fully.

Doctors at Bethlem attended to both those in main Bethlem and those in the criminal wing. Patients in main Bethlem were separated entirely from those in the criminal wing, but it was a forensic psychiatric wing in a general psychiatric hospital, to use today's language. The Home Office from the outset set the criteria for admission to the criminal lunatic wing based on level of risk to others and it determined admission and discharge. Less dangerous criminal lunatics were admitted to local asylums though each local asylum had only a few at any time. The local asylums were disinclined to take any and protested strongly, especially from about 1840. This coincided with the controversy over mechanical restraint. Some criminal lunatics remained in prison.

In 1849, with Bethlem criminal wings being full, the Home Office commissioned a private facility, Fisherton House near Salisbury, to accept some less dangerous criminal lunatics. The Bethlem criminal wings were subject to considerable criticism. Mixing of criminal lunatics with lunatic criminals (sentenced prisoners who became insane during sentence) was found to be problematic, and in the increasingly class-conscious Victorian mentality, the mixing of criminal lunatics of middle or even aristocratic origin with those of the lower strata engendered concern. In 1850 Ireland, then all of which was ruled by the United Kingdom, opened a separate criminal lunatic asylum, Dundrum, near Dublin, the first such institution in the world. In 1863/64 Broadmoor opened in England and took most, though not all, criminal lunatics, the Home Office retaining level of risk as the criterion for admission. Some criminal lunatics were not dangerous enough.

And some ordinary lunatics were dangerous even if not criminal, but unless charged or convicted did not qualify for admission at least not until well into the 20th century. The local asylums continued to protest against taking any criminal lunatics. Today, the interface between general and forensic psychiatry is constructive but tense. In 1800 and 2019 it's all different in some ways but so much the same in others.

Walker, N. *Crime and Insanity in England*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1968

Andrews, J., Briggs, A., Porter, R., Tucker, P. and Waddington, K. *The History of Bethlem*. London: Routledge 1997

Gordon, H. *Broadmoor*. London: Psychology Press, 2012

Gordon, H. and Khosla, V. The interface between general and forensic psychiatry; a historical perspective. *Advances in Psychiatric Treatment* 2014 20 (5) 350-358

**Harvey Gordon**, retired consultant forensic psychiatrist, worked at Broadmoor, then the Maudsley and Bethlem Royal Hospitals, and then at Littlemore Hospital in Oxford. He has also been honorary lecturer in forensic psychiatry at London University and honorary senior lecturer in forensic psychiatry at Oxford University. Among his main professional interests are the interface between general and forensic psychiatry, the interface between psychiatry and other aspects of medicine, psychiatric aspects of driving motor vehicles, psychiatric aspects of terrorism, and religion and forensic psychiatry.

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## **‘She looked very wild, no doubt she was insane’: Maternal child murder, criminal lunacy, and the asylum in nineteenth-century England**

On 13<sup>th</sup> July 1863 Mary Ann Payne was tried at the Old Bailey for the wilful murder of her son, Charles Alfred Payne. On 10<sup>th</sup> June her neighbour had found Mary Ann, who was four months pregnant, lying senseless on flags at the back of their shared house in Marylebone, having seemingly fallen from the second floor. Investigation in the house revealed the body of her 2-year-old son with his throat cut and when questioned, she said, “I have killed my darling: I do not know what made me do it: I must have been mad.” Payne was described as being “an affectionate mother and wife in every point”. At the trial friends and family testified that she suffered with lowness of spirits in her previous pregnancies. John Roland Gibson, surgeon to Newgate, agreed with the evidence given by her local doctor, that pregnancy could cause a morbid and deranged state of mind and his opinion was that she acted “in a paroxysm of insanity”. The jury found her not guilty being insane.<sup>1</sup> Mary Ann Payne was admitted to Fisherton House Asylum, Salisbury as a criminal lunatic on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1863, where she gave birth to a boy in November; she was discharged as recovered in August 1867.<sup>2</sup>

To many in Victorian society the apotheosis of a woman’s life was marriage and motherhood; an intrinsic part of her role was the nurture and protection of her children. To then act against “a woman’s most powerful instinct, the love of helpless children”<sup>3</sup> and murder or grievously harm those children was understandably viewed as heinous, unnatural, and incomprehensible. Such criminal actions were contrary to contemporary cultural idealisations, yet the homicidal mother was often treated with compassion. If the intent behind her homicidal actions was caused by a form of mental disorder, then an ‘acceptable’ explanation for the mother’s unconscionable behaviour lay in a diagnosis of insanity. In this paper I use the case of Mary Ann Payne and others to trace the lives of married mothers who had murdered their own children through the mid-nineteenth-century medico-legal system and asylum system. I show that contemporary popular conceptions of insanity and its causes, in particular those associated with female physiology, impacted both public and legal opinion. Evidence given by medical men could influence judicial decisions regarding homicidal mothers and this evolved in the nineteenth century. The final part of the paper is centred around the women’s lives in the asylums, their treatment and their final outcome, whether discharge or death. The overall aim of the paper is to highlight that, despite committing a crime “at which all humanity shudders”, this discrete group of married mothers were not always viewed as pariahs of society and that cure, not punishment, was ultimately sought for them.

### **Footnotes**

<sup>1</sup> *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* ([www.oldbaileyonline.org](http://www.oldbaileyonline.org), version 8.0, 20 January 2019), July 1863, trial of Mary Ann Payne (21) (t18630713-890)

<sup>2</sup> Mary Ann Payne. Fisherton House Asylum Case Records J7/190/4 Correspondence J7/131/1 Old Manor Mental Hospital Archive Wiltshire History Centre, Chippenham.

<sup>3</sup> Glasgow Herald (Glasgow, Scotland), Monday, September 26, 1870; Issue 9589. <http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk>

### **Further reading – primary**

David Nicolson, C.B., M.D., ‘An Address on Mind and Motive: Some Notes on Criminal Lunacy’. September 13, 1913. *The British Medical Journal* Vol.2 No. 2750

Dr John Baker. Female Criminal Lunatics: A Sketch. 1902 *Journal of Mental Science (The British Journal of Psychiatry)* Vol.48 pp13-28

### **Further reading – secondary**

Jonathan Andrews. ‘The Boundaries of her Majesty’s Pleasure: discharging child-murderers from Broadmoor and Perth Criminal Lunatic Department 1860-1920.’ *Infanticide: Historical perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550-2000* by Mark Jackson. (Aldershot: Ashgate. 2002)

Catherine Cox & Hilary Marland. ‘Broken Minds and Beaten Bodies: Cultures of Harm and the Management of Mental Illness in Mid- to Late nineteenth-century English and Irish Prisons’. *Social History of Medicine*. Vol 31, No.4, November 2018 pp688-710

Joel Peter Eigen. *Mad-Doctors in the Dock. Defending the Diagnosis, 1760-1913*. (Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press. 2016)

Hilary Marland. *Dangerous Motherhood. Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain*. (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan. 2004)

Katherine D. Watson. *Forensic Medicine in Western Society – A History*. (London & New York. Routledge. 2011) Chapter 4. pp72-97.

Martin J. Wiener. "Convicted Murderers and the Victorian Press: Condemnation vs. Sympathy". *Crime and Misdemeanours*, Vol. 1: No.2, 2007 p111

**Alison Pedley** is a PhD Research Student at the University of Roehampton. Having taken her first degree in Modern History at the University of Liverpool, Alison followed a career in banking and leasing, and, after a career break, returned to work in 2000 as a school bursar. She decided to return to her first love of history in 2009, achieving an MA in Historical Research at the University of Roehampton in 2012. Her PhD research is focussed on a specific group of "criminal lunatics", married women who had murdered their own children and were admitted to various institutions including Bethlem and Broadmoor between c.1840 and 1895. Her thesis takes the form of a narrative about the life-journeys of such women through the criminal justice system, the asylums of the day and onwards towards release whether by death or discharge. The research encompasses analysis of the use of the insanity defence within the legal system and also includes a study of the experiences and carceral careers of those women admitted as criminal lunatics into Bethlem, Fisherton House, Broadmoor and other asylums.

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### **Trick-cycling through the underworld**

#### ***My role in forensic psychiatry: an overview of 50 years of academic forensic psychiatry by an emeritus professor of forensic psychiatry***

Forensic psychiatry developed from significant criminal trials at the beginning of the 19th century which created a demand for treatment of dangerous mentally disordered offenders. Bethlem Royal Hospital was the first hospital to take such patients but as the numbers of patients increased special (high security) hospitals were built. In the 20th century psychotherapeutic techniques were introduced for mentally disordered offenders, especially those who were in prison. Two major landmarks were the opening of Grendon Prison in 1962 and the Butler Report of 1975. Overcrowding, an underlying feature of forensic psychiatry had created the need for the Butler Report, which made recommendations for regional secure units among other things. This report was the birth of modern forensic psychiatry; secure units were built in all parts of England, and Scotland eventually followed suit. Prison psychiatry developed as a result of the success of Grendon Prison, and there was a separate prison medical service until 2003 when the National Health Service took over responsibility for prisons.

My role in all of this has been since 1971 when I first became a consultant. I will briefly describe some of my activities in 10 different areas, teaching, research, clinical work, reports, administration, voluntary work, Royal College activities, police advisory work, politics and the parole board. I will mention *en passant* the frustrations of being unable to develop an up-to-date and effective clinical service because of a lack of resources and attitudinal problems.

**Professor John Gunn:** Emeritus Professor of Forensic Psychiatry at King's College London. Medical training in Birmingham. Psychiatric training at the Maudsley Hospital. Head of Department of Forensic Psychiatry at the Institute of Psychiatry with the largest postgraduate teaching centre in Britain for forensic psychiatry 1987-2002. Research has included epidemiological studies of prisoners and special hospital patients and Grendon Prison. A special interest in community forensic psychiatry included setting up a specialised housing for mentally disordered offenders in Brixton. Psychiatric adviser to two parliamentary committees, to the Department of Health and to the Home Office. Member of the Royal Commission on Criminal Justice 1991-3. Co-editor of textbook, *Forensic Psychiatry* and the journal *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, with Professor Pamela Taylor. Other books include one on violence and another on the therapeutic community at Grendon. Chairman, Crime in Mind 2014. Foundation Member of the Royal College in 1971. Chairman of the Forensic Psychiatry Faculty 2000-4, sometime member of Council, and chairman of working parties on supporting psychiatrists under stress and on suicide in prisons. Deputy Chief Examiner 1993-5, Hon Fellow 2010, Trustee 2019. Phillippe Pinel Prize in 1992 for services to international forensic psychiatry. Appointed CBE in 1994.

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### **A historical overview of admissions to Surrey County Lunatic Asylum, 1863-1867**

Asylums in the 19<sup>th</sup> century were a turning point in the history of psychiatry and represented a new way of thinking; that individuals who society saw as mad could in fact be cured.<sup>1</sup> Around London, county asylums were built to coincide with the changing law and to provide a therapeutic environment for those classified as insane, especially amongst the pauper society, whose parishes would pay for their fees.<sup>2</sup> One such asylum was Surrey County Lunatic Asylum, built on Springfield Park, Wandsworth in the early 1800s.<sup>3</sup>

This research project explores the admissions to this asylum over the period 1863-1867. The admission records, which are kept in the London Metropolitan Archives, were accessed to collect the data needed for this research. Results show a wealth of information about the patients admitted to this asylum and allow for an interesting look at the historical context of mental illness in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, more male admissions were seen compared to female; the main diagnoses were dementia, mania and melancholia; and, although a large proportion of patients died in the asylum, a significant percentage also recovered.

This research serves as a starting point in the exploration of Surrey County Asylum paving the way for future exploration of this intriguing institution.

#### **Bibliography**

1. Shorter E., *A History of Psychiatry: from the era of the asylum to the age of Prozac*. United States: John Wiley & Sons, Inc; 1997
2. Wise S., *Inconvenient People: Lunacy, Liberty and the Mad-Doctors in Victorian England*. London: The Bodley Head; 2012
3. Patch L. I., The Surrey County Lunatic Asylum (Springfield): Early years in the development of an institution. *British Journal of Psychiatry* [Online] 1991;159:69-77. Available from: <http://bjp.rcpsych.org/content/159/1/69> [Accessed: 12/2/2015]

**Dr Claire Veldmeijer** studied medicine at St George's Medical School where she intercalated with a focus on Global Health, Medical Ethics and Law and Psychiatry. After finishing her foundation training last year, she took an educational fellow role working in the Royal Sussex County Hospital emergency department, alongside teaching medical students and studying for a PGCert in medical education. Her current career plans are to apply for psychiatry training next year.

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### **Psychiatry and the Third Reich**

Psychiatry has experienced challenges to its practice throughout history, perhaps like no other specialty. Mental health and illness have experienced wide political abuse, where human rights of individuals or groups in society have been violated, with the excuse of psychiatric diagnoses. The Soviet Union, the People's Republic of China, and the German Third Reich are amongst those who used psychiatry as a means to discredit and incarcerate political opponents. The latter exploited it even further to back persecution and mass murder of those considered enemies of the state: Jews, communists, homosexuals, Poles and gypsies, amongst others. The dark era of psychiatry and medicine during the Third Reich teaches us that medical values can, in certain circumstances, be malleable and shaped by external priorities.

**Jimena Seara Prieto** is a Spanish student currently undertaking her fourth year at St. George's Medical School. Although passionate about the medical field as a whole, Jimena takes special interest in politics and its fundamental effect on medical practice, culture and legacy.