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GENETICS & MEDICINE HISTORICAL NETWORK

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Newsletter No. 14, October 2010

1. NEWSLETTER 14

Welcome to Newsletter 14 of the Genetics and Medicine Historical Network. As you can see, there are quite a few events and positive developments to report. One to begin with is that Judith Friedman has joined Peter Harper as Newsletter Editor, and from 2011 she will take over the full responsibility for editing future numbers of the newsletter.

Judith has a background in both science and history. She received her Ph.D. in History from the University of Victoria in November 2008. Her dissertation "Coming Full Circle: The Development, Rise, Fall, and Return of the Concept of Anticipation in Hereditary Disease" traced the history of this odd pattern of human heredity from its origin in 19th century French degeneration theory to our modern understanding of anticipation as an outcome of DNA repeat expansion. In 2010, Judith was a Postdoctoral Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin where she continued her research on the history of anticipation. In October 2010 she joined the Office of NIH History at the National Institutes of Health in the USA as a Stetten Postdoctoral Fellow where she hopes to finish her work on anticipation and embark on a new project studying the history of mitochondrial disease in man.

As co-editor and editor of the Genetics and Medicine Historical Newsletter she is looking forward to getting to know the current members of the GenMedHist network and to reaching out to new members, historians and scientists alike. She would like to see the Newsletter become a clearinghouse for information on the history of Human and Medical Genetics.

Looking back over the content and format of the 14 newsletters issued over the past seven years (all documented on the www.genmedhist.org website) gives an interesting reflection of how interest in the history of human genetics has grown during this time.

Indeed, newsletters in general form an important and frequently neglected area of historical documents, often capturing the early phases of a particular field before it becomes more formalised, with journals and societies of its own.

Dr Judith Friedman

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Newsletter No. 14, October 2010

2. FOURTH INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON GENETICS, MEDICINE AND HISTORY. GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN. JUNE 11th/12th 2010

EARLY HISTORY OF HUMAN MOLECULAR GENETICS

41 people attended the workshop, which was held as a satellite meeting of the European Society of Human Genetics. Invited speakers included both historians and scientists, and came from across Europe and from North America, travel costs being greatly helped by grants from Wellcome Trust and from ESHG.

The principal reason for choosing the theme was the recognition that, while human molecular genetics is a relatively recent area by comparison with other aspects of human and medical genetics, or classical molecular biology, it has had an immense impact during this short time of around 25 years. Also rapid changes in laboratory technology and the predominant use of email, the Web and other electronic techniques make it especially vulnerable to loss of the essential primary sources.

It was recognised that a small workshop of this type could only be a beginning in the process of historical documentation and archiving, but it was felt that a combination of scientists from the field with historians and archivists could make a helpful start and identify some of the key issues.

The speakers, programme and abstracts are attached as part of this report; here the details of individual talks is not given, but some of the main topics covered and discussions arising are mentioned. The entire workshop was recorded; also it is planned that a book, edited by the principal organiser, Christos Yapijakis, will be produced.

In the first session some of the beginnings of human molecular genetics were identified. Christos Yapijakis (Athens), in his opening introductory talk, showed that molecular concepts of inheritance were already being proposed in Hellenistic and Roman times. Soraya de Chadarevian (UCLA) showed how early work on haemoglobin and its structure, by Max Perutz, Hermann Lehmann and others in the 1960s, provided a foundation for the subsequent research that allowed the specific analysis of human genes. Correspondingly, Jan Witkowski (Banbury Center, Cold Spring Harbor), illustrated the impact of the Cold Spring Harbor Symposia in developing both the ideas and technologies that would underpin the future human molecular genetics. The value of the extensive documentation and archiving of all aspects sets an example to others.

Christos Yapijakis and Soraya de Chadarevian

Andrew Read and Tom Maniatis

In the second session, Tom Maniatis (New York), himself one of the key players in the development of human molecular genetics, described the principal discoveries in terms of advances in technology, such as the construction of DNA libraries, and DNA hybridisation and amplification. This was balanced by the presentation of Andrew Read (Manchester), who showed how the new research techniques and findings were first introduced into medical genetics services for important inherited disorders.

(Image of Gothenberg courtesy of James Holm – Goteborg & Co.)

EARLY HISTORY OF HUMAN MOLECULAR GENETICS

The next talks (Judith Friedman, Max Planck Institute, Berlin; Patrick Lestienne, Bordeaux), illustrated how the application of molecular approaches had resolved two important 'problem' areas in human genetics, that of genetic anticipation, with the apparent deterioration across generations explained by DNA instability, and the analysis of the mitochondrial genome and its maternally inherited disorders.

The history of the Human Genome Project was the focus of the next talk, by Ludmila Pollock (Cold Spring Harbor Library and Archives), who described an exciting international initiative (involving Wellcome Trust) to archive digitally as many documents relating to the Project as possible.

The day finished with a general discussion, on which were the priority targets for ensuring the preservation of the history of human molecular genetics. Liz Shaw, one of three Wellcome Trust staff at the workshop, described the Trust's current initiative involving cataloguing and digitisation of genetics records; the importance of interviews was also emphasised, and the problems associated with archiving of electronic records and correspondence discussed. The discussions continued over an excellent dinner!

Day two of the workshop began with two presentations from Mediterranean countries (Dimitris Loukopulos, Athens and Constantinos Deltas, Cyprus) on the applications of molecular techniques to carrier testing and prenatal diagnosis of haemoglobin disorders, showing the profound impact on the frequency of the disorder and the social acceptance of the approach in these populations. Describing the extensive restrictions placed on genetic applications in Germany as a consequence of the Nazi abuses, Heike Peterman (Muenster) placed these developments in a very different perspective. Peter Harper (Cardiff) then discussed the particular lessons to be learned from Huntington's disease both in terms of understanding its molecular basis and in molecular applications.

Returning to the theme of the Human Genome Project and its predecessors, Sue Povey (London) described the series of Human Gene Mapping Workshops held between 1973 and 1990, which set the stage for the Human Genome Project; everyone agreed that this initiative was important to archive and document historically. Likewise the account by Mary-Claire King (Seattle) of the research in the laboratory of Allan Wilson on human evolutionary genetics, largely based on the new molecular techniques, illustrated another area of human molecular genetics with major impact.

In the afternoon, Bengt-Olle Bengtsson (Lund, Sweden), showed a film that he had edited, from the 1948 8th International Genetics Congress in Sweden, giving valuable images of many important geneticists involved and showing the importance of the prolonged interactions allowed by such congresses in those years. This film will soon be available on the Web.

The final presentation came from Walter Bodmer (Oxford) on the history of cancer genetics, showing how molecular approaches allowed both the isolation of key underlying genes and also the detection of those at high risk and the prevention of death by early intervention.

Looking ahead, an offer was made by Heike Peterman (Germany) to organise a further workshop in two years which would particularly involve German historians who have worked on the special issues of genetics in Germany as affected by the period of the Third Reich. This would seem to be a theme that will be of wide international interest also to geneticists and to social scientists, and it is hoped that planning such a workshop will begin soon. Meanwhile the general conclusion is that the present workshop has been both valuable and enjoyable, and that it has helped to put the subject of human molecular genetics firmly on the agenda for detailed historical studies and in particular for measures that will ensure the preservation of the abundant primary material that currently exists but is still in danger of loss.

International Workshop on
Early History of Human Molecular Genetics
Gothenburg, Sweden, June 11-12, 2010

PROGRAMME DAY ONE

Friday, June 11th

9.30-10.30am Coffee and registration

10.30-12.30pm
Session 1: From basic molecular biology to human molecular genetics

*Christos Yapijakis (Athens, Greece): *Welcome and introductory presentation:
Ancestral concepts of human genetics and molecular medicine in Epicurean philosophy.

Soraya de Chadarevian, (Los Angeles, USA):
Hemoglobin and human molecular genetics.

Jan Witkowski (Cold Spring Harbor, USA):
Cold Spring Harbor and the beginnings of human molecular genetics.

12.30-1.30pm Lunch

1.30-3.30pm
Session 2: From DNA analysis to human genetic disease

Tom Maniatis (New York City, USA):
Recombinant DNA technology and human molecular genetics.

Andrew Read (Manchester, UK):
Technology and the development of clinical molecular genetics.

Patrick Lestienne (Bordeaux, France):
The mitochondrial genome: historical aspects.

3.30-4.00pm Coffee

4.00-5.30pm
Session 3: From pedigrees to the human genome

Judith Friedman (Victoria, Canada):
A brief history of the theory of anticipation in hereditary disease.

Ludmila Pollock (Cold Spring Harbor, USA):
Documenting the history of the Human Genome Project. An international data repository.

5.30-6.15pm
Discussion: How can we best preserve the history of human molecular genetics?

7.30pm Workshop Dinner

International Workshop on
Early History of Human Molecular Genetics
Gothenburg, Sweden, June 11-12, 2010

PROGRAMME DAY TWO

Saturday June 12th

9.00-10.30am
Session 4: Genetic testing and prenatal diagnosis

Dimitris Loukopoulos (Athens, Greece):
Thalassaemia: genetic testing and prenatal diagnosis

Constantinos Deltas (Nicosia, Cyprus):
Founder mutations, heterozygous advantage and thalassaemia in Cyprus.

Heike Peterman (Muenster, Germany):
The 'special' situation of genetic testing and prenatal diagnosis in Germany. The influence of history.

10.30-11.00am Coffee

11.00-1.00pm
Session 5: Gene mapping and isolation

Sue Povey (London, UK):
The Human Gene Mapping Workshops 1973-1991.

Mary-Claire King (Seattle, USA):
The revolution in understanding human molecular evolution: Work in the laboratory of Allan Wilson, 1964-1991.

Peter Harper (Cardiff, UK):
Historical lessons from Huntington's disease.

1.00-1.45pm Lunch

1.45-3.30pm
Session 6: From human genetics to genetic medicine

Bengt-Olle Bengtsson (Lund, Sweden):
Film from the 1956 First International Human Genetics Congress, Copenhagen.

Walter Bodmer (Oxford, UK):
The beginnings of clinical cancer genetics.

3. HUMAN HEREDITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

2-4 September, 2010, University of Exeter

Organised by the ESRC Research Centre for Genomics in Society, University of Exeter, in collaboration with the Centre for Medical History University of Exeter and the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. Sponsored by the Wellcome Trust.

It was a privilege to be invited to take part in this small and rewarding international workshop, focused on historical studies on 20th Century Human Heredity. It formed the 5th, and probably final workshop in a wider series led by the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, and was the first to examine human and medical genetics.

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HUMAN HEREDITY IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Exeter University Campus

The participants (see list) probably made up most of the historians active in the field world-wide and I gained, for the first time, a strong sense that there is now a definite 'community' of historians working in this field, rather than just isolated individuals scattered across the globe. The informal and friendly atmosphere, enhanced by the Exeter Campus and surroundings, encouraged real discussions, both during and outside the sessions, and much credit is due for this to the organisers, Staffan Műller-Wille, Ed Ramsden and Bernd Gausemeier. As one of the few non-historians present, I not only learned a great deal of new information, but was encouraged to see how historians are clearly keen to embark on newly available material relating to human and medical genetics, and are appreciative of efforts being made to ensure its preservation.

PARTICIPANT LIST

Jenny Bangham	University of Cambridge
Christina Brandt	Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science
Luc A Berlivet	CNRS (CERMES)
Francesco Cassata	University of Turin
Soraya de Chadarevian	University of California Los Angeles, USA
Nathanial Comfort	John Hopkins University Baltimore
Anne Cottebrune	Institut fur Geschichte der Medizin
Medard Djatou	University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon
Judith E Friedman	Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science
Miguel Garcia-Sancho Sanchez	Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)
Bernd Gausemeier	Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Pascal Germann	Forschungsstelle für Sozial Wirtschaftsgeschichte
Brad Hume	Max Planck Institute for the History of Science
Mark Jackson	University of Exeter
Sabina Leonelli	University of Exeter
Susan Lindee	University of Pennsylvania
Veronika Lipphardt	Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science
Pierre-Olivier Méthot	University of Exeter
Staffan Müller-Wille	University of Exeter
Dianne Paul	Harvard University
Stephen Pemberton	New Jersey Institute of Technology
Ed Ramsden	University of Exeter
Hans-Jörg Rheinberger	Max-Planck Institute for the History of Science
Maria J Satesmases	Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)
Helga Satzinger	University College London
Ranjit Singh	University of Exeter
Edna Súarez-Díaz	National Autonomous University of Mexico
Alexander von Schwerin	Universität Braunschweig
Paul Weindling	Oxford Brookes University
Philip K Wilson	Penn State College of Medicine
Jan Witkowski	Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory

The programme is given here and it is greatly to be hoped that the full papers will be published as a book without delay.

Workshop

Human Heredity in the Twentieth Century

(A Cultural History of Heredity V)

2 – 4 September 2010

ESRC Research Centre for Genomics in Society, University of Exeter, UK

in collaboration with the Centre for Medical History University of Exeter, UK

and the Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany

sponsored by the Wellcome Trust

Thursday, 2 September
Room 128 Amory Building, Streatham Campus University of Exeter

13:00 *Registration*

13:30 *Welcome*

Bernd Gausemeier, Staffan Müller-Wille, Edmund Ramsden

14:00 *Session I: 1945 – A Watershed?*

Bernd Gausemeier (Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin, Germany)

Lineages, Generations, Twins. Approaches to Human Heredity in the Late 19th and the Early 20th Century

Francesco Cassata (University of Turin, Italy)

Carving up Italian genetics: The organization of the 9th International Congress of Genetics in Bellagio (1953)

15:20 *Tea and coffee*

15:50 Nathaniel Comfort (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore)

No revolution: Rethinking the watershed moment in North American medical genetics

Philip K. Wilson (Penn State College of Medicine, Hershey PA, USA)

Championing a U.S. clinic of human heredity: Post-war constructs built upon pre-war concepts

Jan Witkowski (Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, USA) *Comments*

17:40 *Drinks and standing buffet*

19:00 Hans-Jörg Rheinberger (Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin, Germany)

Genes and Genetics, Past and Present

Friday, 3 September
Room 128 Amory Building, Streatham Campus University of Exeter

09:00 *Session II: Models, tools and objects*

Alexander von Schwerin (Technical University Braunschweig, Germany)

The animal side of human genetics: Modeling and organization

María Jesús Santesmases (Spanish National Research Council, Madrid, Spain)

Cereals, chromosomes and colchicine: crop varieties and human cytogenetics at the Estación Experimental Aula Dei, 1948-1958

10:20 *Tea and coffee*

10:50 Soraya de Chadarevian (University of California Los Angeles, USA), *Putting human genetics on a solid basis: human chromosome research, 1950s-1970s*
Susan Lindee (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia PA, USA), *Credibility, disinterestedness and the Atomic Energy Commission: The relationship between H.J. Muller and J.V. Neel as they debated the impact of radiation on human heredity, 1947-1960* Miguel Garcia Sanchez (Spanish National Research Council, Madrid, Spain), *Comments*

12:40 *Buffet lunch*

14:00 *Session III: Medical Genetics*
Judith Friedman (Max Planck Institute for History of Science, Berlin, Germany)
The disappearance of the concept of anticipation in hereditary disease in the post-war world
Stephen Pemberton (New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark NJ, USA)
Hemophilia, "The Most Hereditary of All Diseases": How genetics mattered for experimental hematologists engaged in efforts to manage hereditary bleeding disorders (1947-1964)

15:20 *Tea and coffee*

15:50 Anne Cottebrune (University of Giessen, Germany)
The emergence of Genetic counselling in West Germany: Continuities, changes and shifts of eugenic motifs and utopias in the narratives of involved actors, ca. 1968-1989
Edmund Ramsden (University of Exeter, UK)
Comments

17:00 *Break*

17:30 Diane Paul (University of Massachusetts Boston, USA), Plus ça change*: Debating newborn screening for inherited metabolic disorders*

19:30 *Conference Dinner - Holland Hall dining area*

Saturday, 4 September

Room 128 Amory Building, Streatham Campus University of Exeter

09:00 *Session IV: Race and Genetics*
Brad D. Hume (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany)
Moral courage and "just so" stories: The decline and return (?) of racial mentalities
Djatou Medard (University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon)
Heredity, history and cultures: Conception, representation of albino in Europe and in Africa (Bamileke and Bakweri ethnic groups of Cameroon)

10:20 *Tea and coffee*

10:50 Pascal Germann (University of Zürich, Switzerland)
The abandonment of race: Researching human diversity in Switzerland, 1946-1956
Helga Satzinger, (University College London), *Comments*

12:00 Peter Harper (University of Cardiff, UK)
Preserving the History of Human and Medical Genetics

12:40 *Buffet lunch*

14:00 *Session V*
Jenny Bangham (University of Cambridge, UK)
Genetic maps and anthropological mapping: Blood-group genetics and the transfusion services in Britain, 1939–1951
Veronika Lipphardt (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, Germany)
From "races" to "endogamous communities": Notions of human genetic diversity in the 1950s

15:20 *Tea and coffee*

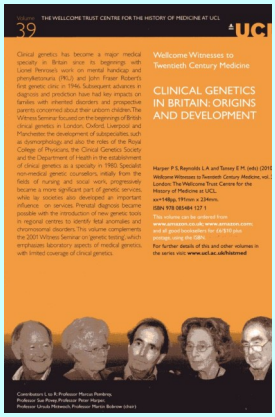
15:50 Luc Berlivet (Ecole Française de Rome, Italy, and CERMES, Paris, France)
"A genetic incubator": Anthropology, eugenics and national identity in Sardinia from the late 19th century to the present
Edna Súarez-Díaz and Ana Barahona (National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico City)
Post-war and post-revolution: medical genetics and cultural anthropology in Mexico, 1945-1970
Staffan Müller-Wille (University of Exeter, UK), *Comments*

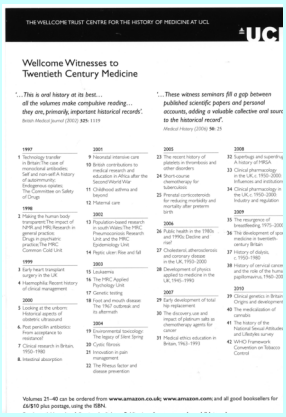
17:40 *Break*

18:00 Paul Weindling (Oxford Brookes University, UK)
Human objects and objections: Coerced experimentation and hereditary research in Nazi Germany 1939-45

4. Witness Seminar: The Origins and Development of Clinical Genetics in Britain

A report of this Witness Seminar, held at the Wellcome Trust on September 23rd, 2008, was given in the last newsletter, but the complete transcript of the Seminar, annotated and with background material, has now been produced as a book (see Bookshelf, below) and is also available on the website of the Wellcome Trust History of Medicine Unit at UCL (www.ucl.ac.uk/histmed/).





When the seminar was held, it was recognised that there were some areas of clinical genetics that could not be covered. Notable among these was ***Clinical Cancer Genetics***, which undoubtedly deserves a workshop of its own, including both laboratory and clinical workers.

It is hoped that someone directly involved in this field will propose it as a topic to Professor Tilli Tansey, leader of the Witness Seminar programme, whose new address is t.tansey@qmul.ac.uk

4. Witness Seminar: The Origins and Development of Clinical Genetics in Britain

Clinical genetics in Britain: origins and development

Clinical Genetics has become a major medical specialty since its beginnings 50 years ago; it now has a major impact on families with inherited disorders and its practice increasingly is becoming part of medicine as a whole. Seven years ago, a Witness Seminar was held on the theme of 'genetic testing', but this emphasised laboratory aspects of medical genetics, with only limited coverage of clinical genetics.The present Witness Seminar will focus on the beginnings of British clinical genetics, its growth and development of subspecialties, the roles of the Royal College of Physicians, Clinical Genetics Society and Department of Health, together with the evolution of specialist genetic counsellors and the contribution of lay societies.- All earlier published Wellcome Witness Seminar transcripts are freely available online at www.ucl.ac.uk/histmed/ following the links to Publications.

From 13:30	**Registration**
14:00–1:00	**Introduction to Witness Seminars, the Chairman, and this meeting**
	Chairman (Professor Martin Bobrow)
	Historical introduction
	General discussion
	Origins and early development: the scientific roots of clinical genetics
	Lionel Penrose and the Galton Laboratory
	Chromosomes and the need for clinical genetics
	Alan Stevenson and the Oxford MRC unit
	The first medical geneticists
	John Fraser Roberts, Cedric Carter and the Institute of Child Health
	Paul Polani and clinical genetics at Guys Hospital, London
	Cyril Clarke and the Liverpool Institute
	Wider development in the field in Britain
	Bodies involved in developing the field
	Royal College of Physicians Clinical Genetics Committee and SAC
	Clinical Genetics Society and British Society for Human Genetics
	Department of Health
16:00–16:20	**TEA**
	Dysmorphology and clinical genetics
	Genetic counselling; the development of genetic nurses and genetic counsellors
	The role of lay societies in the growth of genetic services
	The ethical and social dimension in clinical genetics

5. Human Genetics Historical Library

The Paul Polani Collection

The Historical Library has for several years contained a substantial number of books belonging to Professor Paul Polani, but now the gift of his entire remaining personal library, following closure of the Guy's Hospital Polani Research Library, means that the total collection is reunited on a single site.

Professor Paul Polani

Totalling around 1220 volumes, this collection ranges widely across human, medical and basic genetics, reflecting Paul Polani's contributions to the development of the field over the entire second half of the 20th century. The inventory on the www.genmedhist.org website records the provenance of all books, and the study of Polani's books will be furthered by the detailed cataloguing now made feasible by Wellcome Trust funding.

Detailed Cataloguing

Dr Karen Pierce

An award from Wellcome Trust will make possible the detailed cataloguing of a further 1500 books, essentially making the cataloguing of the entire collection of 3000 volumes complete, since the first 1500 have already been catalogued thanks to previous Wellcome Trust funding.

The work will take place under the supervision of Peter Keelan, Head of Special Collections and Archives, Cardiff University Library; and will be carried out by experienced cataloguer Dr Karen Pierce, who has been involved with the cataloguing of the Human Genetics Historical Library since its inception. All cataloguing data are accessible on the VOYAGER catalogue of the Cardiff University website. The existence of over 3000 volumes related to human genetics located at the same site also makes visits to study the collection itself increasingly rewarding for historians.

Exhibit

An exhibition of books from the Genetics and Medicine Historical Library was held during May 2010 in the Cardiff University Archives and Special Collections exhibits area and generated considerable interest.

6. INTERVIEWS WITH HUMAN AND MEDICAL GENETICISTS

Notes about this project have been appearing in successive GENMEDHIST newsletters for at least five years, so it is good to able to report that at last (!) there is an end result to be seen, rather than simply activity and a degree of frustration at the difficulties of obtaining funding support.

A look at the current www.genmedhist.org website (under 'Interviews') shows that of the 75 recorded interviews completed, 53 transcripts are currently (October 2010) viewable on the website. Most of the others should be processed soon. This is therefore a good moment to express thanks to all involved in the project and especially to the interviewees themselves, who have been both enthusiastic and patient during the prolonged period of processing.

Looking at the range of people interviewed it is encouraging to see the variety of areas of work and countries represented, but equally there are many gaps, quite apart from America, which is being covered (gradually) by a separate project. I hope that others in different countries, both historians and geneticists, will undertake interviews themselves, as it is clearly impossible (and not desirable) for just one person such as myself to interview all those who deserve it. Also, another generation of workers has started to retire since the project began, so a 'rolling programme' is essential.

How valuable are these interviews in historical terms? Some historians are sceptical about the accuracy of such oral information, especially when collected by a non-historian, but I personally think that, provided due allowance is made for the failings and biases of memory, the interviews do give a fair idea of the main events and discoveries involving the past 50 years.

What is undoubted is the insight given into the people themselves, not only their work but their more personal background and early years. And in addition they give information on a previous generation, their teachers and mentors, who are mostly no longer living. Indeed, 10 of those actually interviewed have since died, so however imperfect this record is, much of the material is now irreplaceable.

Looking to the future, now that the processing of this series is nearly complete, I hope to embark on a further round of interviews, focusing on the rather younger founders of human molecular geneticists. But there are other fields that I have barely started to cover, such as the growing community of genetic counsellors, and some European countries which are undeservedly represented, so a network of interviewers will be needed for a full record of the oral history of human and medical genetics to be obtained.

7. THE WWW.GENMEDHIST.ORG WEBSITE

The Network's website has been extensively updated and improved duringthe past year and allows a much fuller picture of new developments than can be gained from a single newsletter. In particular the 'interviews' section, as already noted, now carries the extensive series of transcripts and it is hoped to extend the 'audioclips' and photographic material. The section on the archiving of record sets has benefitted from Dr Tim Powell's notes on his extensive archival work, and a detailed picture of the current status of the Human Genetics Historical Library can be gained.

We are keen to expand the series of links, recognising that the Genetics and Medicine Historical Network website forms part of a wider family of websites which can collectively bring an abundance of valuable material to the notice not only of scholars in the field, but to others with a more general interest. Suggestions for new links, as well as actual material for the website and newsletter, are very welcome.

8. WELLCOME TRUST 'HISTORY OF MODERN GENETICS' FUNDING INITIATIVE

Wellcome Trust, for many years the principal funder of History of Medicine research, has adopted a theme based approach for its archival Research Resource Committee, and has chosen 'the history of modern genetics' as its initial theme for 2010. Among the successful applications in the first round of project submissions are two projects associated with the Genetics and Medicine Historical Network: Archiving the Personal Scientific Records of British Human Geneticists (Tim Powell and Peter Keelan) and Cataloguing the Human Genetics Historical Library (Peter Keelan and Peter Harper).

The Wellcome Library will be coordinating the digitisation of important material relating to genetics. A full list of projects supported is not yet available, as a second round of applications is currently being processed, but it is already clear that this initiative from Wellcome Trust will be a major stimulus for efforts to ensure the preservation and availability of important aspects of the history of human (and more general) genetics for the use of future workers.

9. ANNALS OF HUMAN GENETICS/ANNALS OF EUGENICS: A HISTORICAL RESOURCE

This journal, originally founded by Karl Pearson in 1925, has for almost a century been a key part of human genetics. Edited successively from the Galton Laboratory, University College, London (UCL), by Pearson, RA Fisher, Lionel Penrose, Harry Harris, CAB Smith and Sue Povey, it contains a wealth of original material that is also of great historical importance.

The current editor in chief, Andrés Ruiz Linares, has arranged for a full digitisation of the Journal back to its beginnings. There is also a large amount of associated editorial correspondence and other material, which it is hoped will be archived at UCL. Also closely associated was the Treasury of Human Inheritance, authored principally by Julia Bell, which it is hoped will also soon be digitised.

10. 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERY OF TRISOMY 21

Patricia Jacobs and Marthe Gautier

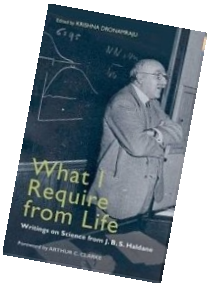
The last newsletter (number 13, viewable on www.genmedhist.org) marked this anniversary of the original 1959 report, but as a postscript it is good to note that in Paris it has been commemorated by a plaque at Hôpital Trousseau honouring the discoverers, Marthe Gautier, Jérome Lejeune and Raymond Turpin.

On a lighter note, a 50th anniversary celebration dinner was held on December 2nd, 2009 at the home of Dr Marthe Gautier, the only member of the Paris group still alive today, to which came Patricia Jacobs and her husband Newton Morton, whose simultaneous report on the XXY chromosome constitution was another landmark of this momentous year. Also present were Simone Gilgenkrantz, historian of French human cytogenetics, André and Joelle Boué, founders of prenatal diagnosis in France, Maj Hulten and Peter and Elaine Harper.

Trisomy 21 Plaque

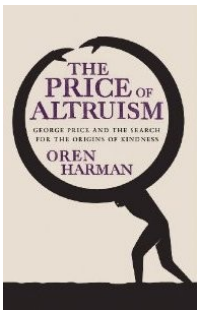
11. BOOKSHELF

The following books of a historical nature have been published recently, which may be of interest to Newsletter readers:



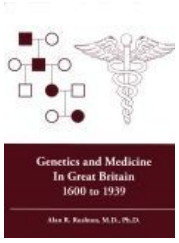
Dronamraju K (2009) What I require from Life: Writings on Science and Life by JSB Haldane OUP Oxford

Harper PS, Reynolds LA, Tansey EM (eds) (2010) Wellcome Witnesses to Twentieth Century Medicine, vol. 39. London: The Wellcome Trust Centre for the History of Medicine at UCL.



Harman O (2010) The Price Of Altruism: George Price And The Search For The Origins Of Kindness. Bodley Head

Wexler A (2010) The Woman who walked into the Sea: Huntington's and the Making of a Genetic Disease. Yale University Press



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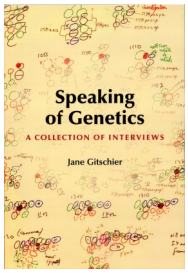

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