



### Current research by Unit staff includes:

#### 1) Medical Education in Provincial England, 1800-1948

The Wellcome Trust University Award awarded to Dr Jonathan Reinartz in 2003 has allowed him to examine the evolution of medical education in provincial England during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focusing on five schools, including Birmingham (founded 1828), Bristol (1833), Liverpool (1834), Newcastle (1834) and Sheffield (1828), it explores seven general aspects of medical education:

- The foundation and organisation of medical schools
- The establishment of associated museums and libraries
- The influence of scientific knowledge on instruction
- The emergence of medical specialities
- The experiences of instructors and students
- The growth of postgraduate education.

Aspects of this research project have been presented as papers at numerous national and international conferences, including university seminars in Exeter

(2005); Birmingham (2004; 2005; 2006; 2007); Glasgow (2005); Liverpool (2006); Bristol (2007); Oxford (2009); Imperial College, London (2009); University College, Dublin (2010); National University of Ireland, Galway (2010), as well as the annual conferences of the American Association for the History of Medicine (Montreal, 2007); the European Association for the History of Medicine and Health (Heidelberg, 2009); and the Canadian Society for the History of Medicine (Vancouver, 2008; Montreal 2010). These currently form the draft chapters of a monograph, which has the working title *Provinces of Learning*.

Unit Director, [Jonathan Reinartz](http://staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/reinartz-jonathan.aspx) ([/staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/reinartz-jonathan.aspx](http://staff/profiles/haps/PrimaryCareClinicalSciences/reinartz-jonathan.aspx)), spoke on his research into medical students experiences of education c.1825-1948 at University College Dublin's Centre for the History of Medicine. [Click here to hear the interview](#)

#### (<http://www.ucd.ie/historyarchives/body.htm#Reinartz>) 2) Embodied Exploration: Medicine, Science and Expeditions in the long twentieth century

As part of her appointment as a Birmingham Fellow, Dr Vanessa Heggie is working on a project about human encounters with extraordinary earthly environments. Following on from her earlier work on [sports medicine](http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/cgi-bin/indexer?owner=728) (<http://www.manchesteruniversitypress.co.uk/cgi-bin/indexer?owner=728>), she is examining expeditionary medicine, exercise physiology and [how doctors and scientists use extreme environmental spaces to learn about human health and disease](http://www.case-medicine.co.uk/news_detail.php?newsid=6) ([http://www.case-medicine.co.uk/news\\_detail.php?newsid=6](http://www.case-medicine.co.uk/news_detail.php?newsid=6))

These practices are not straightforward – rather obviously extreme environments are challenging and dangerous places to travel through and work in; they are often also politically, militarily and environmentally sensitive sites. How do teams of international scientists get access to these spaces? How do they negotiate access across national borders, and how do they manage when they have to be hosted or supported by military infrastructures? How do researchers get ethical clearance for experiments in dangerous places?

The twentieth century is usually characterised as a time when 'big science' - that is high technology, laboratory and experiment-based science - became dominant, particularly in the life sciences with the rise of molecular biology and genetics. Expeditionary science, on the other hand, is often small scale, uses minimal equipment, and is practiced in the field under uncontrollable environmental conditions. What can we learn about modern science by looking more closely at these sorts of experimental and research practices rather than those of 'big science'?

The project divides roughly into three themes:

1. A study of the biomedical aspects of major European expeditions to high-altitude and the Polar regions, c.1850-present
2. An examination of the material culture of experiments in extreme environments: including often overlooked objects like food and clothing, and particularly concentrating on 'macrobioprospecting' (an invented word to describe the adoption of the cultural, biological or material innovations of indigenous people), and the way scientific equipment and biological samples are move around the globe.
3. A history of Wilderness and Expeditionary medicine: including an attempt to recover the 'lost' role of doctors and medical advisors on expeditions to all kinds of extreme environments for all kinds of purposes.

Vanessa was recently interviewed by the [Ideas Lab](http://ideaslab.bham.ac.uk/index.htm) (<http://ideaslab.bham.ac.uk/index.htm>) podcast team for one of their Predictor Podcasts. These podcasts are short interviews with academics who talk about their work and give 'insider knowledge on new trends and key issues' in their fields. In this 9-minute podcast Vanessa discusses her research into the history of sports medicine and extreme physiology. [Listen to the Podcast...](https://audioboo.fm/boos/1843101-dr-vanessa-heggie-expedition-physiology-the-history-of-medical-research) (<https://audioboo.fm/boos/1843101-dr-vanessa-heggie-expedition-physiology-the-history-of-medical-research>)

### Publications...

Heggie V Experimental physiology, [Everest and oxygen: from the ghastly kitchens to the gasping lung](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3607278/) (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3607278/>). Br J Hist Sci. 2013 March; 46(1): 123–147. Published online 2012 October 12. doi: 10.1017/S0007087412000775

And a series of blog posts on themes relating to the project:

- <http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/15/everest-amphetamines-medical-ethics> (<http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/15/everest-amphetamines-medical-ethics>)
- <http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/22/close-shaves-technology-everest> (<http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/22/close-shaves-technology-everest>)
- <http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/29/everest-anniversary-international-science> (<http://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2013/may/29/everest-anniversary-international-science>)



#### 3) Insanity and lunatic asylums in the British Wesh Indian Colonies, 1838 – 1914



This study, facilitated by a Research Expenses Grant from the Wellcome Trust, is run by Leonard Smith and considers the development of the lunatic asylum system in the West Indies in the decades following the abolition of black slavery in 1838. The research concentrates on the islands of Jamaica, Barbados, Trinidad, Antigua, Grenada and St Lucia, and to a lesser extent on the mainland territories of British Honduras (Belize) and British Guiana (Guyana). Documents in the National Archives in London, as well as local archive material and information gathered from visits to surviving institutions, are being utilised. The study will seek to ascertain how the British approach to the care and management of mentally disordered people was reflected and adapted in the particular circumstances of the West Indian colonies, with their highly stratified societies based on racial and class divisions, and their economic

impoverishment.

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