Programme

Friday 16 May 2014, Deller Hall, Senate House

12.30-13.00 Registration; tea and coffee

13.00-13.15 Housekeeping; welcome from Joanna Bourke


14.00-15.30 Panel 1, chaired by Claire Sewell

Uncovering alternative stories
Tommy Dickinson: Living and Working on the Fringe: The Hidden History of Gay Life in Mental Hospitals in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Anna Harpin: A Theatrical Hospital: Broadmoor Performed

Jenny Walke: Mansions in the Orchard: from Bedlam to Bethlehem

15.30-16.00 Coffee break

16.00-18.00 Panel 2, chaired by Daniel Pick

Re-examining medical theories
Victoria Bates and Chris Millard: Paediatrics or Psychiatry? Alternative Narratives of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy

Rebecca Wynter: Rewriting the Psychiatric Whodunnit: Doctors, Scientists and Suspicious Sinuses

Reconsidering archives and sources
Aude Fauvel: Writing against Psychiatry: Hector Malot, the Patients’ Voice and the "Asylum Novels" in 19th century France

Anna Sexton and Dolly Sen: Two Perspectives on Creating the Mental Health Recovery Archive

18.00-19.00 Drinks reception - all welcome

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Saturday 17 May 2014, Deller Hall, Senate House (room open from 9.30am)

10.00-11.30  **Panel 3, chaired by Sarah Chaney**  
**Reading psychiatric narratives**  
Zsófia Demjén: Drowning in Negativism, Self-Hate, Doubt, Madness: Linguistic Insights into Sylvia Plath’s Experience of Depression

Ali Hutchinson: The Language of "Madness" and the "Madness" of Language: The Politics of Discourse

Olivia Vazquez-Medina: Cristina Rivera Garza and the Narratives from the General Insane Asylum in Early 20th Century Mexico

11.30-12.00  Coffee break

12.00-13.30  **Panel 4, chaired by Hilary Marland**  
**Revisiting the asylum**  
Louise Hide: Life on the ‘Refractory Ward’: Cultures of Violence in London’s Asylums, c. 1900

Jessie Hewitt: Family Life without the Family: Private Asylum Psychiatry in Nineteenth-Century France

Katherine Fennelly: A Great-coat, a Gardener and a Rebel’s Account: Irish Lunatic Asylum Lodges and their Keepers, 1825-1850

13.30-14.30  Lunch break (please see final page for nearby lunch venues)

14.30-16.00  **Panel 5, chaired by Jennifer Wallis**  
**Expressing experience**  
Nicole Baur and Natasha Lushetich: Temporal Maps and the Production of Inscapes in Psychiatric Institutions 1940s – 2010s

Agnieszka Komorowska: Psychiatric Narratives as Alternative Narratives of Contemporary Algeria: Mental Disorder and National Trauma in Malek Bensmail’s Documentary *Aliénations*

Maren Scheurer: Graphic Analysis: Alison Bechdel’s *Fun Home* and *Are You My Mother?*

16.00-16.15  Short break

16.15-17.30  Roundtable discussion chaired by Joanna Bourke  
Discussants: Simon Cross, Jacqui Dillon, Diana Rose, Barbara Taylor

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Speaker Biographies and Abstracts  
(in order of appearance)

Conference chair: Joanna Bourke  
j.bourke@bbk.ac.uk  
Joanna Bourke is Professor of History in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology at Birkbeck. Over the years, her work has ranged from the social and economic history of Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to social histories of the British working classes between 1860 and 1960s, to cultural histories of military conflict between the American Civil War and the present, to a history of fear. In recent years, she has been researching the history of sexual violence, which resulted in a book entitled Rape: A History from the 1860s to the Present. In 2011, she published a history of what it means to be human, exploring human-animal relations between 1791 and the present. She is currently engaged in a large, Wellcome Trust-funded project investigating the history of pain between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries.

Opening lecture: Mathew Thomson  
m.thomson@warwick.ac.uk  
Mathew Thomson is a Reader in the Department of History at the University of Warwick and a member of Warwick's Centre for the History of Medicine. He completed a PhD on the emergence of concern about the 'feeble-minded' in Britain, and this was later published as The Problem of Mental Deficiency: Eugenics, Democracy and Social Policy in Britain, 1870-1959 (Oxford, 1998). His first academic appointment, supported by a Wellcome University Award was at the University of Sheffield from 1993-8. From there he moved to a post in modern British history at Warwick. Here he completed a study on the popularisation of psychological thought and practice in twentieth-century Britain, published as Psychological Subjects: Identity, Health and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain (Oxford, 2006). Since then, he has published on Britain's first psychoanalyst David Eder, he has undertaken research on the history of student health, and he has been involved in a collaborative project that has begun to chart a history of recent mental health care policy. Recently, he published a new book on fears about child well being in post-war Britain: Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement (Oxford, 2013). At the moment, he is involved in plans for a cultural history of the NHS. He also occasionally returns to a longer-term project on the life and work of Geoffrey Gorer, and it is this subject that provides his starting point for reflecting on alternative psychiatric narratives at this conference.
Friday 16 May, 14.00-15.30
Panel 1: Uncovering alternative stories

Chair: Claire Sewell  
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Claire Sewell is based at the Centre for the History of Medicine at the University of Warwick, researching a PhD entitled: 'The Emergence of the Carer: Mental Illness, Disability, and the Family in Post-War Britain'. Her research, which is kindly funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, is concerned with the place of the family carer in mental health care in post-war Britain. In October 2013 she co-organised a one-day conference, "Made Up People': An Interdisciplinary Approach to Labelling and the Construction of People in Post-War History', at the University of Warwick. The keynote speaker for this Wellcome Trust supported conference was Professor Ian Hacking. Her forthcoming publication with the Journal of Family and Community History is entitled ‘"If one member of the family is disabled the family as a whole is disabled": Thalidomide Children and the Emergence of the Family Carer in Britain, c. 1957 to 1978’.

Tommy Dickinson  
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Tommy graduated from Bournemouth University as a Registered Nurse in 2001. He then worked clinically across the UK and Australia, in a range of settings, where he took up various nursing and leadership roles. He moved into academia in 2006 and has held lectureships at Salford University, The University of Central Lancashire and Chester University. He is currently at the University of Manchester, where is a Lecturer in Mental Health Nursing. Tommy completed his PhD at the University of Manchester in 2012. His thesis entitled: 'Mental Nursing and “Sexual ‘Deviation”: Exploring the Role of Nurses and the Experience of Former Patients, 1935 - 1974', utilised oral history interviews to explore the experiences of former patients who received aversion therapy in a bid to ‘cure’ their ‘sexual deviations’, which included homosexuality and transvestism. Using the same method, the study also investigated the role nurses played in implementing these ‘treatments’. Following on from his doctoral studies, he has written his first monograph entitled “Curing Queers” with Manchester University Press, which is due out late 2014, and advised on the Channel 4 documentary “Undercover Doctor: Cure me I’m Gay” with Dr Christian Jessen.

Living and Working on the Fringe: The Hidden History of Gay Life in Mental Hospitals in the Mid-Twentieth Century
By virtue of their position on the fringes of “respectable society”, mental hospitals appeared to represent a space where variation not only within the patients, but also within the workforce could be relatively accepted. For some staff, their difference was their “counter-cultural” lifestyle or a problem with substance misuse. However, for others it was their sexual orientation. Nevertheless, male homosexuality was illegal in England and Wales from 1533 until 1967; and it was also considered an antisocial “sexual deviation” that could be “cured” until 1974. Nurses administered painful and distressing “treatments” to cure these individuals. This paper is based on a wider study, which used oral history interviews to examine the plight of men who were institutionalised in British mental hospitals to receive “treatment” for homosexuality, and the perceptions and actions of the men and women who nursed them, 1935-1974. Interestingly some of the nurses in this study identified themselves as gay men and it appears that they were generally accepted by their
heterosexual colleagues. There is a dearth of literature, however, which discusses the sub-culture of homosexual male nurses in mental hospitals. In this paper I argue that there appears to have been an overt homosexual male sub-culture in some mental hospitals in the UK. These men appeared to find a lively atmosphere, a culture and a community in which to belong. This paper enhances understanding of sexuality in relation to nursing as a profession, by revealing a fresh interpretation of the draw of mental nursing to gay men; and offers some intriguing insights into the hitherto hidden gay lives of these nurses and the inevitable tension between their own identities and desires and the treatments they administered to others.

Anna Harpin
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Anna Harpin is a senior lecturer at the University of Exeter. Her research examines post-war British and Irish theatre and film with particular interests in madness, trauma, and questions of representation. She has recently published articles in Interdisciplinary Science Reviews, Contemporary Theatre Review, Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory, Performance Research, and Studies in Theatre and Performance. She is currently writing a monograph with Routledge entitled Disordered: Madness and Cultural Representation. Anna is a member of the Madness and Literature Network, and the International Health Humanities Network. She is also an honorary fellow of the Institute for Mental Health. Alongside her academic work she is a writer and director for her theatre company Idiot Child.

A Theatrical Hospital: Broadmoor Performed

Broadmoor Hospital occupies a peculiar cultural position. It is, in some ways, both a secret and a scandal, opaque and over-exposed, unknown and familiar. While relatively few are aware of the day-to-day realities of the hospital, from its opening in 1863 to the present, many more can easily recount the infamous figures that have be housed therein: William Chester-Minor, Richard Dadd, Peter Sutcliffe, John Straffen, Ronnie Kray, Charles Bronson, and so on. In this way, the biography of Broadmoor Hospital is itself, perhaps unsurprisingly, the collected biographies of its patients. Moreover, if one searches for cultural representations of Broadmoor in literature, theatre, film, and television, the most prevalent model is the biographies and autobiographies of its most famous patients. In these ways, then, such narratives of Broadmoor have begun (at least in part) to meet Porter’s call for patient-led voices speaking back to power against dominant psychiatric orthodoxies. However, this paper is concerned to excavate Broadmoor’s other tales. I am concerned to counter the ubiquity of the biographical narrative of the hospital in order to illuminate its quieter, unsensational history. This is not in a bid to devalue the works of auto/biography – though a significant proportion are problematic in their voyeurism of ‘pseudo-Bedlam’; rather it is to examine what other stories the hospital, and in particular its theatre practices, might reveal about the cultural meaning and status of madness and asylums both within and beyond the hospital’s walls. This paper will chart the history of performance within Broadmoor hospital and ask what this theatrical past can tell us about notions of care, risk, and therapy. I will chronicle and analyse the theatrical ephemera of the hospital and offer a counter-narrative to the lurid, stigmatising public spectacle of Britain’s most notorious psychiatric hospital.
Jennifer Walke
Jennifer.Walke@kcl.ac.uk

Jennifer Walke is an Early Career Researcher on the Wellcome Trust-funded project Mansions in the Orchard: Space, Architecture and Asylum in the ‘Care in the Community’ Era. This is an interdisciplinary public history initiative, exploring staff, service user and local resident experiences of life at twentieth-century Bethlem Royal Hospital. Methods include interviews, archival study, and photographic documentation of the landscape and architecture. Additionally, Jennifer is employed as a Research Worker within the Service User Research Enterprise (SURE) at the Institute of Psychiatry, King’s College London. Prior to this, her PhD used Bethlem as a case study for exploring twentieth-century changes in the profile and experiences of psychiatric inpatients. This was preceded by an MA in medical history and an undergraduate degree in psychology.

Mansions in the Orchard: from Bedlam to Bethlem

The contemporary work of Bethlem Royal Hospital featured in a recent Channel 4 documentary series. However, the institution had a lengthy history before the (1930) move to its current site, and the modern Bethlem has been neglected by historians, overshadowed by dominant narratives of Georgian and Victorian ‘Bedlam’. The ‘Mansions in the Orchard’ project seeks to fill this gap, focusing on the lives and experiences of the people and the changing architecture of the hospital over the last eighty years. This Wellcome Trust-funded interdisciplinary research is associated with the forthcoming move of the Bethlem Royal Hospital Archives and Museum to the main administration block in the hospital.

As a psychiatric hospital that continues to provide inpatient services, Bethlem provides a focal point for reassessing, in particular, the historical emphasis on community care. In a period that has seen dramatic changes to residential psychiatric hospitals, memories of lost buildings - such as the entertainment hall or the onsite farm - feature heavily. Furthermore, the project can provide important historical context to today’s mental health services and policies, as well as aiding the destigmatisation of mental illness through public engagement activities.

Today's presentation reports preliminary findings from interviews and focus groups with people who were involved in Bethlem’s administration and development during the mid to late 20th century, who visited or stayed at the hospital as patients or carers, or were long-term residents of the local area. It thus provides a conduit for important new voices and insights into the history of psychiatry, and ultimately reflects a site that is simultaneously timeless and evolving. In an era notable for the growth of community care, exploration of the continuing reality of institutional life presents a vital counterpoint to existing historiography.
Friday 16 May, 16.00-18.00
Panel 2: Re-examining medical theories and reconsidering archives and sources

Chair: Daniel Pick
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Daniel Pick moved to Birkbeck as Professor of History in the Department of History, Classics and Archaeology in 2005. He is also a psychoanalyst and Fellow of the British Psychoanalytical Society. He has written on the history of psychoanalysis, psychology and psychiatry; the relationship of Freudian thought to historiography; evolutionary theory and the idea of degeneration, eugenics and social Darwinism; modern ideas of war; the myth of Svengali; cultural attitudes to crime and madness in the Victorian period. His publications include The Pursuit of the Nazi Mind: Hitler, Hess, and the Analysts (2012), and Faces of Degeneration: A European Disorder, c. 1848-1918 (1989). He is an editor of History Workshop Journal, a member of the advisory board of Psychoanalysis and History and Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture. He is also on the editorial board of the New Library of Psychoanalysis.

Victoria Bates and Chris Millard
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Victoria Bates is Lecturer in Modern History at the University of Bristol. She has a particular research interest in the social history of medicine in modern Britain, including medico-legal history and medical humanities. Her primary research to date has been on the history of sexual forensics and crimes against children in Victorian and Edwardian Britain, on medicine in late-twentieth century popular culture and on the ‘humanisation’ of healthcare. Her more recent research on Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy brings together the first two of these research interests.

Chris completed his PhD in 2012 on attempted suicide and self-harm in twentieth-century Britain at Queen Mary, University of London. The principal focus of that work was the provision of psychiatric expertise at general hospitals, and the new categories and concerns that this was able to generate. He is currently on a three-year Wellcome Trust Medical Humanities fellowship at that institution researching Munchausen syndromes: Munchausen syndrome (faking or inducing illness to get oneself medical attention), Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (fabricating or inducing illness in a dependent other), and Munchausen by Internet (faking illness online). The research examines the ways in which different Munchausen syndromes address different anxieties about the social environment or social setting. He is also about to start a three-month placement at the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology, researching and briefing on the issue of parity of esteem between mental and physical health.

Paediatrics or Psychiatry? Alternative Narratives of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy
This paper will examine the recent history of Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy (MSbP), an unstable diagnostic category with ambiguity at its core. MSbP was a term coined by the British paediatrician Roy Meadow in The Lancet in 1977 to describe cases in which carers – usually mothers – fabricated or induced illness in children. The crux of this paper is the controversial question of whether MSbP denotes a form of child abuse or refers to the psychiatric motivations of the perpetrator. Since the 1970s many paediatricians have argued that MSbP was a ‘pediatric, not a psychiatric, diagnosis’ and that ‘a perpetrator cannot have M[S]bP … than have shaken baby syndrome’. Despite such
claims, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders tentatively included MSbP in its appendix in 1994. This paper will explore these competing narratives, which lie at the heart of MSbP’s unstable and controversial nature. It will explore paediatric attempts to narrate and stabilise the category of MSbP as child abuse (1980s and 1990s). This stability was in, turn, disrupted by media and cultural representations of criminal trials and female perpetrators including Beverley Allitt as ‘suffering from’ the psychiatric disorder of MSbP (1990s). Ultimately the paper will show how the two narratives projected fundamentally different and incommensurable meanings of MSbP. The ambiguity of MSbP in an age of biomedicine continues to confound efforts for narrative coherence.

Rebecca Wynter
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Rebecca Wynter is an Honorary Research Fellow in History, Visiting Lecturer in the History of Medicine Unit (University of Birmingham), and Postdoctoral Researcher at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre, Birmingham. Her research centres on: material culture; lunatic asylums, prisons and workhouses; neurodisabilities and epileptic colonies; and the Friends’ Ambulance Unit, 1914-1919. Her publications include “Good in all respects’: appearance and dress at Staffordshire County Lunatic Asylum, 1818-54’, History of Psychiatry (March 2011). Her new book (co-edited with Jonathan Reinarz) - Complaints, Controversies and Grievances in Medicine: Historical and Social Science Perspectives - will be published by Routledge in September 2014.

Rewriting the Psychiatric Whodunnit: Doctors, Scientists and Suspicious Sinuses

In 1922 the City and University of Birmingham came together to establish the ‘Joint Board of Research for Mental Diseases’. Their purpose was ambitious: to discover through laboratory research the ultimate biological cause of mental illness. Coupled with the post-First World War remaking of Birmingham’s mental hospitals, a new laboratory was then built and fitted out at Hollymoor - an asylum which, along with another at Rubery, was presided over by Superintendent Thomas Chivers Graves.

Informed by the Board’s first director, the renowned neuropathologist Frederick Mott, Graves and scientist Frank Pickworth effectively reconceptualised the search for the cause of insanity as the country house mystery, playing Cluedo through the different spaces of the body. By deductive reasoning and a process of elimination, through studies of endocrinology, metabolism, bacteriology and pathology, Graves and Pickworth finally chased down the culprit: it was the sphenoidal sinus, near the pituitary fossa, with ‘greenish cheesy pus’ from which a toxic cycle of focal sepsis systematically poisoned body and brain.

This paper traces the implications of the alternative narrative for the cause of mental distress conceived in 1920s Birmingham, incorporating the other leading characters in the plot: the laboratory; ear, nose and throat surgeons; and the men and women who found themselves inside the mental hospital in the 1920s and 1930s. Centring on the clinical application of the theory of focal sepsis, the paper will embrace the scientific journal as a way to explore the therapeutic role of scientists and specialists other than psychiatrists, and as a vital source through which to reach the experiences of patients otherwise inaccessible to current historians.
Aude Fauvel
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Aude Fauvel is a senior lecturer at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) and assistant director of the Institute for the History of Medicine (U. of Lausanne/Chuv). Specializing in French history of psychiatry, she has paid particular attention to the ‘anti-alienist’ movement—a nineteenth-century critical cultural movement that prefigured the later ‘antipsychiatric’ discourses of the 1970s. More recently, she has started research on the history of women’s criminality, focusing on female sexual molesters. She has co-authored a book about the ‘mad’ caricaturist André Gill, contributed to several collective books and published numerous articles on the topics of psychiatry, gender and medicine. Her most recent publications in English include: “A World-Famous Lunatic. Baron Raymond Seillière (1845-1911) and the Patient’s View in Transnational Perspective”, in W. Ernst & T. Mueller (eds), Transnational Psychiatries. Newcastle, 2010, 200-228; “Crazy Brains and the Weaker Sex: The British Case (1860-1900)”, Clio, 2013-37, 38-61.

Writing against Psychiatry: Hector Malot, the Patients’ Voice and the "Asylum Novels" in 19th century France
In France Roy Porter’s proposal to reconsider the history of psychiatry by confronting the medical discourse with other viewpoints is still relatively unknown. Up until very recently, French historiography was entirely polarised by Michel Foucault’s analysis of the ‘psychiatric power’. Even those who criticised his approach did so from the inside, discussing the medical texts that constituted the Foucauldian corpus. Whether ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ Foucault, most historians thus took it for granted that the modern era had been dominated by psychiatric discourses and considered that the French psychiatrists had managed to reign untroubled, entombing all criticism within the walls of their asylums from the 19th century up until the 1960s.

Recent research has shown that this classic premise of the French history needs to be discussed: in France —as elsewhere— psychiatrists have in fact always been criticised, meaning that there existed ‘anti-alienist’ movements long before anti-psychiatric ones. In this paper, I therefore propose to shed light on this neglected aspect of the French psychiatric past by re-examining the case of novelist Hector Malot, who became known as the defender of the mad after having published a realist book on the asylum system in 1868 (Un beau-frère). Not only did his novel spur a lasting public debate, it also prompted others to raise their voices. The success of Malot’s book initiated a trend of ‘asylum novels’, where other writers questioned the meaning of mad-doctoring; it also had the unexpected effect of encouraging patients to express themselves. By retracing Malot’s work and the effects it had on the French culture of madness, I will thus explore how writers and patients co-shaped French ‘anti-alienist’ conceptions at the end of the 19th century, a time when many believed that what the insane had to say was as important as their physicians’ jargon.

Anna Sexton and Dolly Sen
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Anna Sexton is a Doctoral Award Candidate working on research funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council exploring participatory approaches to archives. Her research represents a collaboration between the Department of Information Studies at UCL and the Wellcome Library. She is using the creation of the mental health recovery archive to actively explore issues connected to ‘participation’, ‘collecting’ and ‘activism’ in an archival context.

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Dolly Sen is a writer, director, artist, filmmaker, poet, performer, public speaker, mental health consultant and trainer. She has 8 published books since 2002, including the highly acclaimed 'The World is Full of Laughter; she has performed at The Young Vic, the Royal Festival Hall, and Trafalgar Square, toured and won awards for her poetry; her film commissions include the Barbican and The Royal Academy. She dropped out of school at 14 because of severe mental health difficulties. She was told she would never amount to anything and was heading for Broadmoor. She believed this and was on her way to heading there when she changed her belief into believing she could do anything she wanted to do.

Two Perspectives on Creating the Mental Health Recovery Archive
This presentation will explore the construction of the mental health recovery archive (http://mentalhealthrecovery.omeka.net) from two different perspectives.

Anna will talk about her motivations as the Archivist/Researcher within the project and will situate the construction of the archive amidst her own growing understanding of Archivists as active (as opposed to passive) shapers of memory and history. She will talk about what it means to refocus the role of the Archivist using a social justice lens; paying attention to (and seeking to address) the marginalizations and exclusions that are created through archival acts. Anna will situate the mental health recovery archive in relation to the broader mental health related archive collections held at the Wellcome Library; and will explore how the mental health recovery archive is being used as a tool for challenging and questioning current archival practice and the historical record that is being created within this mainstream institution.

Dolly will talk about her motivations as a contributor to the mental health recovery archive and the importance that she places on addressing the lack of independent user narrative in mainstream mental health archive collections. She will talk about how her narrative contribution can be used as a representation of revision for others who may need or want to rewrite their own story. Dolly will also situate her contribution to the archive in broader discussions around psychiatry and will address how, at this time and place, psychiatry needs to be looked at critically.
Saturday 17 May, 10.00-11.30
Panel 3: Reading psychiatric narratives

Chair: Sarah Chaney
s.chaney@ucl.ac.uk
Dr Sarah Chaney has recently completed her PhD focusing on 'self-mutilation' within asylum psychiatry in late nineteenth century England, and is currently working on a book on The History of Self-Harm, to be completed in 2015. Sarah is the joint organiser of the "Damaging the Body" seminar series (http://damagingthebody.org), and also writes for the Bethlem Blog (http://www.bethlemheritage.wordpress.com). She is principal investigator on a Wellcome Trust People Award for Public Engagement with the Bethlem Museum of the Mind titled 'Mansions in the Orchard: Space, Architecture and Asylum in the 'Care in the Community' Era'.

Zsófia Demjén
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Zsófia Demjén is Lecturer in English Language and Applied Linguistics at The Open University. Her research interests include non-literary stylistics, discourse analysis, metaphor, medical humanities and health communication. Before moving to The Open University, Zsófia was a senior research associate at Lancaster University on the ESRC-funded Metaphor in End of Life Care project. She has a BSc in Management from UMIST, an MA in Language Studies and a PhD in Linguistics from Lancaster University.

Drowning in Negativism, Self-Hate, Doubt, Madness: Linguistic Insights into Sylvia Plath’s Experience of Depression

In this paper, I would like to argue that linguistic analyses have the potential to offer insights into the experience of psychological disorders, and therefore should be applied more in medical contexts, especially in medical humanities. As a case study, I examine key extracts from The Unabridged Journals of Sylvia Plath to demonstrate what linguistic analyses can reveal about Plath’s experience of depression. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods highlights distinctive patterns in the use of metaphor, personal pronouns and verbs, among others.

Depression emerges as a highly complex and sometimes contradictory experience for Plath, involving both a sense of apathy and inner turmoil. The use of metaphor suggests that Plath experienced her mental state as contradictory, where her mind is both impotent and in the process of self-attack at the same time: [my mind] caged, crying, impotent, self-reviling, an imposter. There is also sense of exhaustion and helplessness ([I want to] crawl back abjectly into the womb), supported by the quantitative analysis of Plath’s use of mental and behavioural process types, suggesting that the mental state is difficult to overcome. Abundant dichotomous structures (e.g. all, nothing, everyone, nobody, always, never), identified through corpus methods, suggest that Plath experienced the world in a more polarized way than the average person. Such analyses may have practical implications, for example: assuming that the way one uses language both reflects and influences the perception of reality, constructive therapeutic work might be accomplished by actively reframing how patients talk about their experience of depression. Similarly, while textual analysis alone may not be sufficient as a diagnostic tool, monitoring patients’ language could potentially function as a kind of early warning system, highlighting individuals who may be at risk of moving towards, in this case, more severe depression or suicidal ideation.
Ali Hutchinson
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Ali Hutchinson completed an MA in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture at the University of Chester, gaining a distinction for her dissertation which explored the social identity of the ‘schizophrenic’, as represented through examples of art and literature of the nineteenth century. In 2012, she began her PhD, exploring the relationship between language and ‘madness’, with a particular focus on the configuration and representation of the self within ‘madness’ narratives. She is a Visiting Lecturer at the University of Chester.

The Language of “Madness” and the “Madness” of Language: The Politics of Discourse

Saussure regarded language as ‘a factor of greater importance than any other’: the ability to communicate is an essential part of entering collective discourse, and configuring a social identity. Erich Heller contended that ‘man has been given language […] so that he can say what he has chosen not to be silent about’, and this assumption of what it means to be human (the ability to employ language, to have a voice) leaves little space on the social landscape for the individual who is silent or silenced. I will explore the relationship between ‘madness’ and language, in order to establish where language fails in the case of the individual’s experience of mental illness. ‘Madness’ relies on language as a means of communication, as, according to Foucault, ‘language is the primary and ultimate structure of madness’. We perceive ‘madness’ through the lens of the terminology which surrounds it, and, for most of us, this language is our only point of reference for what it means to experience ‘madness’.

However, the vocabulary currently available for discussing ‘madness’ is primarily the creation of the medical profession, described by Foucault as ‘entirely empty’, comprised primarily of ‘vegetal myth[s]’, so loaded with preconceptions that it has informed the public conception of what it means to live ‘madness’. In the absence of a counter-narrative, this hegemonic discourse of what ‘madness’ is remains unchallenged, usurping control of how the ‘mad’ self is presented and represented. I will explore the possibility of restructuring language and conventional narrative forms in order to accommodate the ‘madness’ experience: to offer a space in which the self can be reconfigured away from limited and limiting psychiatric discourse. An alternative narrative - comprised of a ‘language of madness and not about it’ - could reclaim ‘madness’ from the realm of ‘otherness’ and of stigma, instead allowing it to stand as a testament to the myriad shades of human experience.

Olivia Vazquez-Medina
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Olivia Vazquez-Medina is a Lecturer in Hispanic Studies at Royal Holloway, University of London. She graduated with a BA in Spanish Language and Literature from the Universidad Veracruzana, in Mexico, and obtained an MSt in European Literature and a DPhil from the University of Oxford (2010). Her principal publications include two articles on the theme of illness in Gabriel García Márquez’s novels, and a book on representations of the body in contemporary Spanish American historical fiction. Her current research investigates the representation of physical and mental illness in a range of contemporary novels, including Cristina Rivera Garza’s No One Will See Me Cry (1999). Drawing on theories of embodiment, space and subjectivity, a further ongoing research project examines the aesthetic and politics of sensorial imagery in travel narratives.
Cristina Rivera Garza and the Narratives from the General Insane Asylum in Early 20th Century Mexico

This paper seeks to compare the use of psychiatric narratives in two works by Mexican writer and historian Cristina Rivera Garza. In both her scholarly study of the Mexican General Insane Asylum La Castañeda and in her novel No One Will See Me Cry (1999), Rivera Garza explores the medical histories of a number of inmates at this asylum in the early 20th century. She reads the medical files focusing on the discursive negotiation between inmates and doctors, and on the role of the patient in the construction of her own ‘narrative of suffering’. In both texts, this is accompanied by an elucidation of the place of these narratives with respect to a wider, national historical narrative. Some of the questions this paper addresses are the following: What is the function of psychiatric narratives in the scholarly text, and how is that function translated, maintained, resisted or modified when transposed into the literary text? Do we read these narratives differently, depending on whether they are part of a scholarly text or a novel (and if so, why and how)? What are the ethical and political implications of Rivera Garza’s inclusion of psychiatric narratives in both types of work?
Saturday 17 May, 12.00-13.30
Panel 4: Revisiting the asylum

Chair: Hilary Marland
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Hilary Marland is Professor of History at Warwick, researching the social and cultural history of medicine and health, particularly in modern Britain. She has an ongoing interest in women and mental illness and published Dangerous Motherhood: Insanity and Childbirth in Victorian Britain in 2004 (Palgrave-Macmillan). She has recently completed a book on medical and health advice literature for young women, Health and Girlhood in Britain, 1874-1920 (Palgrave-Macmillan). In 2010 she started work on a Wellcome Trust-supported project on Irish migration and mental illness between the Great Famine and Irish Independence, and is beginning new research into prisons and health. Together with Catherine Cox and Talking Birds Theatre Company, she is working towards the production of a play based on the Irish migration project, ‘A Malady of Migration’, to be performed this summer in Coventry and Dublin.

Louise Hide
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Louise Hide is an Honorary Research Fellow at Birkbeck, University of London where she has recently finished working on a three-year, Wellcome Trust funded project on the history of pain led by Professor Joanna Bourke. Her first monograph Gender and Class in English Asylums 1890-1914 will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in September 2014. Her research interests focus on delusions and bodily pain experienced by asylum patients.

Life on the ‘Refractory Ward’: Cultures of Violence in London’s Asylums, c. 1900
The threat of physical violence loomed large for many patients and staff living and working in asylums towards the end of the nineteenth century. Measures were taken to manage it with drugs, seclusion and in some cases the re-introduction of physical restraints such as ‘strong dresses’. But asylum records still contain many accounts of violent behaviour perpetrated by both staff and patients, male and female, against each other. In this paper, I will address different forms of physical violence that took place on the male and female wards of London’s county asylums at the turn of the twentieth century. Exploring such behaviours as narratives, I will ask what they can tell us about the underlying culture of the institution and the subjective experiences of those involved. Such actions might have been precipitated by delusional beliefs and hallucinatory voices. Yet, asylum practices, processes and ‘treatments’ – both written and unwritten – played a significant role in exacerbating or ameliorating them. For example, to what degree did male attendants, many of whom had previously been in the army, take the law into their own hands on the ward? Did a patient’s class make a difference to the type of physical violence perpetrated against her? How important was it for asylum nurses to conform to normative gendered behaviours? Was a measure of physical brutality unofficially condoned? And what does the language of violence – ‘punch’, ‘slap’, ‘smack’, ‘kick’, ‘strike’, ‘struggle’ – tell us about the interpretation and recording of these behaviours?
Jessie Hewitt
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Jessie Hewitt is currently working as a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of San Francisco. She specializes in the history of Modern Europe, particularly that of nineteenth-century France. After completing her B.A. at the University of California at Santa Cruz, Dr. Hewitt pursued graduate studies at UC Davis where she finished her Ph.D. in 2012. Her dissertation examined the emergence of new attitudes towards madness in the post-revolutionary period, paying special attention to the ways in which ideas about gendered behavior shaped doctors’ interactions with their patients. She has one article forthcoming later this year in the journal French Historical Studies and is currently revising her dissertation for publication (tentatively entitled Alienating the Family and Domesticating the Asylum in Nineteenth-Century France).

*Family Life without the Family: Private Asylum Psychiatry in Nineteenth-Century France*

This paper analyzes the elaboration of a psychiatric treatment called the vie de la famille—a method of treatment that required the asylum director, his patients, and the director’s family to all live under one roof. The vie de la famille, or the “family life,” was based upon the idea that patients could not properly recover while living with their own relatives, but that exposure to the rhythms and values of the middle-class home would encourage their return to rationality. I argue that private asylums that utilized the family life method were liminal spaces—neither public nor truly private—whose workings exposed contradictions at the heart of both the asylum system and bourgeois domestic ideology.

Unlike their public counterparts, scholars have written little regarding the history of private asylums in nineteenth-century France. This is largely due to a paucity of primary source material. However, I have discovered a unique and lengthy work by a woman raised in her parents’ asylum who later opened and directed an institution of her own. This document (along with supplementary materials written by her father, her critics, and other observers) provides invaluable insights into the history of private asylum psychiatry. Through an analysis of the family life method, my paper will thus present an alternative psychiatric narrative—one in which women were not merely the victims of psychiatric power, but also the inventors of new methods of control.

Katherine Fennelly
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Katherine Fennelly completed a BA (Hons) in History and Archaeology in 2007 at University College Dublin, where she also completed an MA in Archaeology in 2008. She has recently completed her PhD at the University of Manchester. Her thesis examined the management, architecture and administration of lunatic asylums in England and Ireland in the early nineteenth century. She is currently publishing her research on asylums, and preparing research on social and heritage concerns associated with institutional sites.

*A Great-coat, a Gardener and a Rebel’s Account: Irish Lunatic Asylum Lodges and their Keepers, 1825-1850*

Gate-keepers and the lodges they inhabited occupied an important position in the running and hierarchy of lunatic asylums, while concurrently bridging a social gap between the interior of the institution and the outside world. The gate lodges oversaw the first point of entry to the asylum, the primary entrance gate. The buildings were generally small dwellings, consisting of a reception room,
a bedroom, and sometimes a small kitchen and yard; some lodges had their own privy to the rear.

One gate-keeper received a great coat, one was a gardener on top of his tasks, and one wrote a book about his involvement in an uprising. However, beyond these small details in minute books and ledgers, asylum gate-keepers and their abodes remain marginal in narratives of psychiatry in the early nineteenth century. This paper will consider how gate lodges related to the architecture of the asylum, presenting them as liminal zones occupied by peripheral figures in control of passage both in and out of the asylum. Irish examples built between 1815 and 1850 will form the focus of this paper, due to the uniformity in asylum architecture in Ireland, with reference to English examples. This paper seeks to draw out the centrality of lodges and their keepers in the spatial arrangement and running of lunatic asylums in the nineteenth century.
Saturday 17 May, 14.30-16.00
Panel 5: Expressing experience

Chair: Jennifer Wallis
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Jennifer Wallis is a Postdoctoral Research Assistant on ‘Diseases of Modern Life’, a project at the University of Oxford investigating the problems of stress, overwork, and nervous illness in the 19th century. She is particularly interested in relationships between doctors, patients, and medical technologies; her current research is concerned with how air was harnessed via objects such as artificial respirators for therapeutic effect. Her previous work has examined how the bodies of asylum patients interacted with Victorian asylum practices, sometimes performing their own medico-scientific work to feed back into institutional practice; an illustration of this can be seen in ‘The Bones of the Insane’ (History of Psychiatry, 24:2, June 2013).

Nicole Baur and Natasha Lushetich
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Nicole Baur is a researcher in the Exeter Centre for Medical History. She holds a PhD in Health Geography (Heidelberg University, Germany, 2005). Since coming to the UK in 2006, she has been researching social and spatial aspects of the history of medicine and science, working extensively within interdisciplinary teams to pursue her long-standing interest in the interaction between society, environment and human health. Specific work has included spatial analyses of weather patterns and mental illness, people’s perceptions of place and local conditions in their experience of illness as well as their interpretations of illness-related memories.

Natasha Lushetich is an artist, researcher and Lecturer in Performance and Visual Cultures at the University of Exeter. Her specialist areas include intermedia, performance and philosophy, and questions of identity and ideology. Natasha is author of *Fluxus The Practice of Non-Duality* (Rodopi 2014) and her recent writings have appeared in *Babilonia, Performance Research, TDR, Theatre Journal, Total Art Journal* as well as in a number of edited collections.

*Temporal Maps and the Production of Inscape in Psychiatric Institutions 1940s – 2010s*

Every site is constituted through the intersections of social activities, social relations and the participant’s comprehension of (and response) to the ‘dramaturgical requirements’ of the situation. In other words, every site is a dynamic and unstable construct. Spatial maps tend to impose a (disembodied and distant) bird’s eye point of view on the complex processes through which sites are construed. Temporal maps, by contrast, capture the sequence of events experienced from an embodied point of view and include a heterogeneous agglomeration of signs: spatial demarcations and traces, the social participants’ gestures and utterances, their movement and tone of voice as well as the objects they use. By employing an interdisciplinary methodology which relies on three disciplines (medical humanities, performance studies and art history), this paper investigates the formation of inscapes – internalised ambiances and cultural landscapes – in two different sites and epochs: the Devon County Mental Hospital of the 1940s and the Bethlem Royal Hospital of the 2010s. Through analysing a series of first-person narratives provided by patients and their carers/families as well as onsite observation we seek to establish a relationship between the patients’ temporal maps and their inscapes – the settled, in some cases even coagulated perceptions of the above-mentioned
psychiatric care spaces. In drawing a parallel between the two epochs we also draw a parallel between the disciplinary society of the 1940s and the 2010s’ society of control. Here, we compare the methods and practices of incarceration, coercion and care evident in the micro-management of the above institutions and in doing so argue for a peformative and temporal rather than spatial constitution of incarceration, which operates through symbolic processes and subliminal maneuvers.

Agnieszka Komorowska
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Agnieszka Komorowska is a researcher in Romance Literatures and Media at the University of Mannheim in Germany. She has studied comparative literature and Lettres Modernes at the Universities of Duisburg-Essen and Jean Moulin Lyon III. She has completed her PhD in French Literature at the Ruhr-University of Bochum with a book on the semantics of shame in the French novel since the 1980s (in preparation for publication). Her research focuses on the interplay of literature and emotions, phenomenology and the contemporary novel in France as well as the representation of mental disorder in Algerian cinema. She has published articles and participated in conferences on 20th and 21st century French and francophone literature, organised an international conference on “Espace et affectivité” (2009) and co-edited a dossier on Michel Houellebecq in the journal Lendemains (Vol. 36/2011).

Psychiatric Narratives as Alternative Narratives of Contemporary Algeria: Mental Disorder and National Trauma in Malek Bensmail’s Documentary ‘Aliénations’
Since Frantz Fanon’s critique of colonial psychiatry in The Wretched of the Earth (Les Damnés de la Terre, 1961) the treatment of mental disorder has been closely linked with questions on national and cultural identity in Algeria. In the history of Algerian cinema the psychiatric clinic has become an emblematic heterotopia representing an alternative space to colonial and postcolonial discourses. While movies like Youcef (1993) directed by Mohamed Chouikhh depict the psychiatry in rather stereotypical ways, contemporary Algerian cinema offers more subtly nuanced representations. The paper aims to analyse Malek Bensmail’s documentary Aliénations (2003) and its cinematic strategies of telling the story “from within”. As the son of Belkacem Bensmail, one of the founding fathers of postcolonial Algerian psychiatry, the director Malek Bensmail is allowed an intimate look in the psychiatric clinic of Constantine, the workplace of his deceased father. The look, that the documentary casts upon the clinic’s patients, depicting their everyday life, their consultations with the psychiatrists, but also their contact with marabouts, is far from a clinical gaze. Rather, the camera enters in a complex and ambivalent relationship with the patients. My paper aims to show that ‘Aliénations’ can be considered as an attempt to tell an alternative psychiatric narrative through a cinematic technique of uncertainty. This uncertainty concerns the relationship between the patient’s mental illness and his/her place in the Algerian society. It also concerns the relationship between the patients and the camera as their playful interaction questions the genre of documentary and the cinematic gaze.

Maren Scheurer
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Maren Scheurer studied General and Comparative Literature, English Studies and Psychoanalysis at Goethe University Frankfurt, Germany (2005-2011), and the University of York, UK (2009). Since
receiving her Masters Degree, she has been working on a PhD thesis on therapeutic relationships in literature, theatre, and television, and she is currently employed as a lecturer at the Department of General and Comparative Literature in Frankfurt.

**Graphic Analysis: Alison Bechdel’s ‘Fun Home’ and ‘Are You My Mother?’**

In her graphic memoir ‘Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic’ (2006), Alison Bechdel uses comics to intermedially and intertextually recount her father’s as well as her own life and thus work through conflicts she has long been struggling with: the difficult relationship with her parents, her father’s suicide, his and her own sexuality and gender identity. In the sequel ‘Are You My Mother? A Comic Drama’ (2012), now turning towards her mother, Bechdel takes her graphic analysis one step further by interweaving her own narrative with the narrative of two long-term psychoanalytic therapies that helped her deal with loss, depression, her compulsions, and writer’s block.

The comic offers a surprisingly suitable format to depict the workings of therapy, allowing Bechdel to visualize the interrelatedness between self and other, presence and past, reality and imagination as well as the transformation of time and space in psychoanalysis. However, her ‘comic drama’ is not only an alternative way of narrating therapy. Her comics also outline the various strategies Bechdel uses to supplement the healing process she undergoes. These include writing and being written, reading and dissecting the lives and writings of literary as well as psychoanalytic authors such as F. Scott Fitzgerald and Virginia Woolf or Sigmund Freud and Donald Winnicott. Most of all, however, her comics emerge as analytic projects in their own right that enable her to work through her relationships by graphically redesigning, replaying and reliving them.

In this paper, I want to discuss both Bechdel’s representation of the therapeutic experience as well as the therapeutic experience embodied in this representation. By doing so, I hope to shed light on the comic’s potential for exploring intra- and interpersonal processes in and outside therapy as well as the therapeutic potential of reading, writing, performing, and drawing.
Saturday 17 May, 16.15-17.30
Roundtable discussion

Simon Cross
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Simon Cross is author of Mediating Madness: Mental Distress and Cultural Representation (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). Simon has also published related articles on visualizing insanity in documentary television, historical and contemporary humour about madness, media and the voice of insanity, and British tabloids and the Broadmoor’s criminally insane. He does other things too and is currently working on tributes to Jimmy Savile (pre-scandal obviously). Simon is currently Senior Lecturer in Media and Cultural Studies at Nottingham Trent University but is open to offers.

Jacqui Dillon
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Jacqui is the national Chair of the Hearing Voices Network in England and a key figure in the Hearing Voices Movement internationally. She is an Honorary Lecturer at the University of East London, Honorary Research Fellow at Durham University and Visiting Research Fellow at Birmingham City University. She has personal and professional experience, awareness and skills in working with trauma and abuse, dissociation, ‘psychosis’, hearing voices, healing and recovery. Along with Professor Marius Romme and Dr Sandra Escher she is the co-editor of Living with Voices, an anthology of 50 voice hearers’ stories of recovery. She is also co-editor of Demedicalising Misery: Psychiatry, Psychology and the Human Condition and Models of Madness: Psychological, Social and Biological Approaches to Psychosis (2nd Edition). Jacqui is also a voice hearer.

Diana Rose
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Diana Rose is a social scientist and also a mental health service user. She undertakes research from the service user’s perspective. She came to the Institute of Psychiatry nine years ago after pioneering user-focused research for seven years in a London-based charity. She has developed new methodologies in order that the user ‘voice’ can be more clearly heard in research. She co-directs SURE whose staff are mainly users or ex-users of mental health services as well as being scientists. She is currently working both on epistemological issues and developing ways of finding out exactly what difference user involvement in research makes to both process and outcomes as well as policy.

Barbara Taylor
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Barbara Taylor is an intellectual and cultural historian with a special interest in the subjective dimension of historical change. Her early research focused on feminist theory and history: she has published two well-known books on early British feminism, and in the late 1990s she ran a Leverhulme-funded international research project on feminism and Enlightenment. She is the co-convenor of a long-standing seminar at the Institute of Historical Research on ‘Psychoanalysis and History’, and has written a personal history of mental health care in the late twentieth century, The Last Asylum (2014). Her current research investigates attitudes to solitude in Enlightenment Britain.

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The organisers

Hazel, Stef, Susie and Janet are all PhD candidates in the History department at Birkbeck, University of London.

Hazel Croft is researching ‘War Neurosis and civilian mental health in Britain in the Second World War’. Her thesis explores how the diagnosis of ‘war neurosis’ was constructed and theorised, and examines wartime psychiatric practice, both inside and outside of institutions. Hazel is interested in the relationship between war and mental health in the 20th and 21st century, and the intersections between class and gender in psychiatric history and theory. Some of these themes are explored in her chapter, ‘Emotional Women and Frail Men: from Shell-Shock to PTSD, 1914-2010’ in Ana Carden Coyne (ed.), Gender and Conflict Since 1914: Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspective. She is currently working on a chapter for a forthcoming volume on traumatic cultures during the Second World War.

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Stef Eastoe is researching the social and cultural history of idiocy in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, using Caterham as a case study. She is also interested in the transmission of psychiatric theory to the ‘front-line’ of asylum care and treatment of those deemed incurable, and the experience of the staff, gender, administrative developments and the influence of the state and policy makers on the development and character of the institute. She is interested in the language that surrounds mental health, illness and disability, as well as the pedagogical, medical, social and visual cultures that shape the wider discourse on the subject.

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Susie Shapland is researching the cultural history of psychopathy in the twentieth century, focusing on Britain and the USA. Her thesis considers the history of personality disorders in general, but in particular looks at psychopathy’s relationship with moral insanity and imbecility, and Antisocial Personality Disorder; how they are located in discourse on normality, abnormality and subnormality; how they are defined against madness and sanity. She is particularly interested in narratives around treatability, the associated philosophical concepts of redemption and evil in relation to psychopathy and personality disorders, and the portrayal of psychopaths in the media and popular culture.

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Janet Weston is researching medical approaches to diagnosing, treating, and curing sexual offenders in mid-twentieth century Britain, focusing upon the rise of forensic psychiatry, medical interventions inside prisons, and the activities of private psychotherapeutic clinics such as the Tavistock and Portman. She is the Secretary of the Institute of Historical Research’s History Lab, a member of the Raphael Samuel History Centre team, and a mentor for 6th form students in Hackney with the charity Arts Emergency.

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