discussed. This illustrates that the author not only tried to give medical historians access to this unique primary resource, but to put the material into perspective as well.

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Keir Waddington, *Charity and the London hospitals, 1850–1898*, Studies in History New Series, Woodbridge, Royal Historical Society and Boydell Press, 2000, pp. xii, 252, illus., £40.00, US$75.00 (hardback 0-86193-246-3).

Despite recognizing their importance, hospital historians have traditionally been less interested in the administrative and financial aspects of institutions under study, although paradoxically this documentation has survived much better than clinical records. We tend easily to forget that most hospitals periodically teetered on the brink of insolvency even though many had been initially launched with generous endowments provided by pious donors. Saddled with the somewhat fixed expenses of providing shelter, food, and care, hospital income remained highly dependent on the fickle generosity of individual patrons, the uncertain revenues from investments, and the greed of corrupt administrators. Waddington's work, focused on Victorian voluntary institutions in London, thus fills an important gap in our understanding of nineteenth-century British hospitals. Instead of depicting the "great" metropolitan establishments as heroic arenas for medical and surgical triumphs, the author allows us to see them as administratively contested and financially precarious establishments, constantly struggling to raise more funds and pay their mounting debts.

The book is chronologically divided into three parts. The first discusses in detail the charitable imperative that motivated prospective donors, followed by a close look at their role in the management of institutions thus supported. Readers will readily discover the contours of a private benevolent economy based on philanthropy and voluntarism that was a source of pride in British society. Employing rich published and unpublished hospital sources the author probes the multiple layers of contemporary meaning associated with the concept of charity. A third section looks at the events of 1897 and beyond.

Waddington is at his best in penetrating the autocratic world of hospital subscribers and their selfish reasons for giving and then adopting managerial functions to further their business and political careers. Fundraising and social enhancement went hand in hand, with subscription lists printed in annual reports and newspapers. In London, those middle-class governors represented a male élite jealous of its status, a close group of well-to-do gentlemen with enough money and leisure to run their institutions, even successfully protecting their turf against the inroads of an ascendant medical staff. The carefully maintained separate spheres between them led to constant tensions and struggles for control of admissions, patient monitoring, and institutional discharges. By the 1890s, the endemic financial crisis in the metropolis' major hospitals triggered more fears of state intervention, seen as a threat to voluntarism and local control. To no avail, both the creation of a royal sponsored collection, the Prince of Wales Hospital Fund (1897), and a voluntary Central Hospital Council for London (1898) sought to improve finances and avoid the competition and duplication of services. Charity alone could no longer solve social problems, allowing the state to join in a partnership with voluntary efforts that came to shape the health care sector for the first half of the twentieth century. In conclusion, Waddington's account represents an impressive display of scholarship. He has

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methodically canvassed and sifted through a large amount of archival information. An appendix on financial sources and methodology as well as a comprehensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources round up a well-written book.

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Peter Bartlett and **David Wright** (eds), *Outside the walls of the asylum: the history of care in the community 1750–2000*, London and New Brunswick, Athlone Press, 1999, pp. xiv, 337, £45.00 (hardback 0-485-11541-7), £16.99 (paperback 0-485-12147-6).

Peter Bartlett and David Wright begin their edited volume by quoting from the opening lines of my *Museums of madness*, a book which they are kind enough to call "arguably the most influential monograph on the history of psychiatry in Britain". For me, at least, the effect of this compliment is somewhat spoiled when they immediately proceed to mis-state my central thesis: "In stark juxtaposition, Scull contrasts the open and tolerant care of the insane in pre-industrial communities with the restrictive incarceration of the Victorian period . . . as a new regime of discipline and surveillance replaced social tolerance and individual liberty" (p. 1). Nor is this just a matter of my injured authorial *amour-propre*, for it is around this historiographic issue that they claim to have framed their collection of papers. It is as well, then, to clarify at the outset where I believe that they have misrepresented my position and, more generally, that of a whole generation of historians who, they claim, have mistakenly placed the asylum at the centre of psychiatric historiography.

In the first place, I went to great pains in *Museums of madness* to *attack* the notion of "a mythical pre-institutional Golden Age, when the population at large enjoyed the blessings of living in 'communities'—an innocent rustic society uncorrupted by the evils of bureaucracy, where neighbour helped neighbour and families gladly ministered to the needs of their own troublesome members, while a benevolent squirearchy looked on, always ready to lend a helping hand . . . what we know of the treatment either of the clearly frenzied or of problematic people in general lends little support to such romantic speculations" (pp. 261–3). Second, as the subtitle of my book reveals, my central concern was "the social organization of insanity in nineteenth-century *England*", not Britain, and this distinction is important, for the history of madness in the Celtic fringe is clearly quite distinct from the English experience.

Four of the eleven papers that make up Bartlett and Wright's volume elaborate upon that distinction: R A Houston marshals a variety of evidence from eighteenth-century sources to document Scotland's distinctive approach to the mentally incapacitated in that period, and Harriet Sturdy and the late William Parry-Jones re-examine the Scottish boarding-out system of the nineteenth century (a phenomenon the latter had first examined in a pioneering paper on the Gheel colony system and its influence as long ago as 1981). Oonagh Walsh, in a rather sloppy paper, looks at some of the peculiarities of the Irish response under British colonial governance, claiming *en passant* to substantiate "David Wright's recent suggestion that families, rather than the asylum authorities, regulated admissions to asylums" (p. 141). (A quarter century ago, I suggested that the very availability of the asylum "tended to encourage families to abandon the struggle to cope with the troublesome" and that "it was this *lay* conception of what was and was not behaviour which could be borne which fixed the boundary between the sane and the

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