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books by herself and her collaborators, G. Scott Williamson and Lucy Crocker, *The case for action* (1931), *Biologists in search of material* (1938), and *The Peckham experiment* (1943). Set up in the 1930s, the Peckham centre housed under one roof an enormous range of social activities for the community, from carpentry and swimming to ante-natal guidance, in the service of two deeper scientific goals. First, the “bionomic” desire amongst the founders to observe the social transactions of families within a wider milieu, seeing how inner impulses and outer opportunities dovetailed to form patterns of achievement activity. As Innes Pearse makes clear, all those families who joined the centre were being continually “watched” (its building was designed, like Bentham’s panopticon, to ensure maximum visibility), and they had to agree to initial and regular “overhauls” and “screenings”. Yet, the ideas behind the centre were far from “authoritarian” (much to the chagrin of orthodox contemporary social workers and administrators). As far as possible the centre was to be self-running, Scott Williamson and Innes Pearse believing that a “biological” order would establish itself, emergent out of the integrative action of the various social organisms making up – not the aggregate but the “whole”.

Second, the belief that social medicine had taken a wrong turning in being pre-occupied with disease, its cure and prevention, rather than with health as a real and positive entity. To the end of promoting health, the Peckham centre provided extensive consultations with families to instruct on topics such as pregnancy and breast feeding, regular health checks (including for couples contemplating marriage), a health farm and health holidays, and healthy environments (e.g. pioneering the use of hammock cots).

Innes Pearse’s recollections and vindication provoke many intriguing questions. One would like to know far more about the intellectual roots of the movement – its precise blend of organicist bio-medical theory, left-wing politics (combining primitivist elements with Fabian tendencies), and philanthropy. The “ethnomethodology” of the encounters between South London working-class families and idealistic young doctors would be good to know about from the other side. And it would be fascinating to have the connexions and parallels brought out between Peckham and other contemporary movements to anthropologize and educate the lower classes in Darkest England: Mass Observation comes to mind. It is time an outsider explored the achievements and ambiguities of the Peckham experiment.

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CHARLES LYTE, *Sir Joseph Banks: eighteenth-century explorer, botanist, and entrepreneur*, Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1980, 8vo, pp. 248, illus., £10.50.

It is now nearly thirty years since the last complete biography of Banks, and Charles Lyte has many advantages over his predecessor, H. C. Cameron. Impressive research has been done on particular episodes – Banks’s voyage to Newfoundland and Labrador in 1766, for instance, and the kidnapping of Spanish Merinos to breed a royal flock. *The “Endeavour” journal of Joseph Banks 1768–1771* has been published, and by way of a bonus, the author enjoys a new freedom to be explicit about Banks’s

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adventures in the South Seas as “Voyager, Monster-hunter and Amoroso”. Lyte makes the most of the comic possibilities of the pursuit of his hero by the voracious middle-aged queen Pura; nor does he forget his English mistress Miss B---n. As the subtitle suggests, Banks’s early travels loom much larger in this book than the long afternoon of correspondence and power as President of the Royal Society, and instigator of innumerable research and publishing projects. The story of the travels, and of Banks’s rows with the Admiralty and fellow-Academicians, is told with verve; it is spoilt only by the author’s irritating partiality for breathless one-sentence paragraphs.

There is not much point in complaining that this book is not the long-awaited treatment of Banks’s role as scientific entrepreneur and virtual monopolist, which is so urgently needed. Charles Lyte makes no claims to original research, and his select bibliography does not even include Warren Dawson’s massive calendar of Banks’s correspondence. The reason why we still wait for a comprehensive book on the panorama of Banks’s activities is not hard to find – the sale of the greater part of the Banks papers by Lord Brabourne in 1886 has condemned all subsequent researchers to tracking down letters in the custody of libraries and private owners on every continent. In the meantime, Charles Lyte’s book is to be welcomed, not least for its excellent colour plates.

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THOMAS E. CONE, jr., *History of American pediatrics*, Boston, Mass., Little, Brown, 1979, 4to, pp. xiv, 278, illus., \$18.95.

In the preface, Cone correctly states “there is no published comprehensive history of American pediatrics”. His book is, he explains, an attempt to fill this gap and must be appreciated as a first essay in this direction. Cone is to be thanked for assembling so much information in one place. The book provides a chronology of major technical advances in the practice of paediatrics, a Who’s Who in American paediatrics – replete with mug shots –, and several succinct lists detailing when major textbooks and speciality journals were published. Morbidity and mortality data on the major childhood diseases and conditions, and the treatments used throughout the centuries are also given. There is a great deal of emphasis on infant feeding practices; some of this material appeared earlier in Cone’s *200 years of feeding infants in America* (1976).

Although Cone’s “principal aim has been to write a history of American pediatrics”, he has “not written the book primarily for the specialist in medical history . . . rather for the medical practitioner, the medical student, and all others who may have an interest in the evolution of contemporary medical care of children”. This emphasis on physicians is reflected in the book; there is too much technical detail at the cost of historical analysis. By and large, Cone does not deal with the problems of paediatrics within a social, political, or economic context. The chapters on the Colonial period show the most historical perspective, reflected in the number of fine