

# A Project for Compiling a Database of Non-English Language Historical Texts in the Field of the History of Forensic Medicine

By Daniel Taylor, Oxford Brookes University, History BA

Project Supervisor: Dr. Katherine D. Watson

## The Project:

Supporting the research work of Dr. Katherine D. Watson of Oxford Brookes University, with the goal of finding and summarising non-English language historical and historiographical literature that can be used to:

- 1) Determine the scope and type of Non-English language material relating to the history of Forensic Medicine in Western Society.
- 2) Create a database that can be used by Dr. Watson on a research aid whilst writing her book *Forensic Medicine in Western Society – A History, Routledge, for delivery in July 2009*.
- 3) Develop knowledge of the History of Forensic Medicine in Western Society since 1800 with a particular focus on obtaining a wider understanding of Medical Legal practice outside of the Anglo-American sphere.

Also, to be formally accredited for UK academic research and the system role it has played in helping with the research work of Dr. Watson, and contributing to the creation of the book *Forensic Medicine in Western Society – A History*.

## Summary of Results:

I have been able to observe many attempts at establishing coherent European literature. Specifically in the form of Rudolf Van Embler's 1981 three volume work *Criminology and Forensic Science 1950-1980* to create a bibliographical reference history of Western research in the field of Criminology, which I believe to be the first such broad ranging attempt made since Arthur McDevine's *Criminology* of 1955.

These books, as their titles might suggest, deal with Criminology as a discipline and are chiefly records of case histories rather than records of studies of its history. In other words they represent a kind of inferential history but not a substantiated one. It is my principal observation that of the few hundred articles and books I have seen out of the many thousands that exist, the most abundant are those of an inferential nature. They are often found in encyclopaedia or treatises contributing to forensic science, supplementing the main focus on the present day with a look at the past.

## Evaluation of Project:

This project has presented me with many challenges and opportunities, from dealing with contemporary academic and history in the field of the history of forensic medicine to creating MYSOL and practicing language skills, from a quantitative and qualitative investigation, to locating and compiling a database in areas this information. I believe that the opportunity to be involved in just contribute to academia has given me some real insight into the academic world in the form of historical research and investigation. I am sure that the experiences and skills gained will be of great use in the future and will certainly steer me towards a career involving such rewarding and interesting work.

"Not only has Daniel unearthed some useful references in English... but I had not previously been aware of, but he has neatly summarised the contents of books and articles in other languages which will allow me to gauge their relevance to my own work... I think I expect that contribute materially to my own project" - Dr. Katherine D. Watson, OBE University.

"... my study with conducting bibliographical research electronically and in major research libraries was eye-opening a 4480 that he will find useful in the future, in his undergraduate career and in any subsequent matter to it requires the ability to gather information, assess its relevance in the task of legal medicine & will share it with others" - Dr. Katherine D. Watson, OBE University.

## Objectives:

- 1) Become a formally qualified user of Advanced Microsoft Access. To aid in database creation and design.
- 2) Become familiar with researching methods and practices. Gain professional historical research and writing experience. Also experience in information retrieval and evaluation with oral and written reporting.
- 3) Increase my knowledge of the History of Forensic Medicine.
- 4) Complete my project into my academic degree program, in such a way that will benefit related master components of my degree and justify, if successfully executed, obtaining an appropriate number of academic credit for the project (a total of 24 academic credits are required in order to complete my History BA).

## Process:

- 1) Use URSS project funding to take ECDL (European Computer Drivers License) program in Advanced Microsoft Access.
- 2) Use URSS project funding to purchase "TZ trip - Oxford Ticket for travel between Oxford and London. Also purchase "Dyer's card" for London tube travel.
- 3) Become affiliated with Major Research institutions and gain access to original academic research sources.
- 4) Create a database then how to use and design relational database management systems using MYSOL (Microsoft every language).
- 5) Set of weekly seminars held at Oxford Brookes University, hosted and attended by leading academic experts in the field of the History of Medicine.
- 6) Submit an ISM (Independent Study Module) request form to Oxford Brookes University's History department with the provisional title of: "A History of the relationship between Crime and Epilepsy in Brazil and Europe, a comparison". An academic credit will be derived from the research work of the project and a 4000 word essay on this to be submitted, to run in the following semester.

## Results:

- 1) I have now taken and passed my ECDL course in Advanced Microsoft Access. As well as a number commercial and open source tools taking the 239.30 library remote access protocol.
- 2) I have become personally acquainted with some of the leading figures in this Academic field from across the UK.
- 3) I am now a reader, affiliate and researcher at the British, Wellcome and Bodleian Libraries.
- 4) Due to this entire project I am more familiar with the world of professional, historical research and writing.



ECDL Advanced

ECDL Advanced Certificate

Daniel Taylor

This successfully certifies all requirements for the granting of the European Computer Driving Licence Advanced Database



Research at the Bodleian Library

Research at the Wellcome Library

Research at the British Library



Project End

## Schedule

ECDL Examination

Research at the Bodleian Library

Research at the Wellcome Library

Research at the British Library

Seminar hosted by OB Uni: Dr. Roy Hinninshel, formerly of the Public Records Office, discussing his latest book, *Comments Before 1517 and the Reliability of their Records*.

Research at the Bodleian Library Starts

Seminar hosted by OB University: Dr. Pamela Fobler (Centre for English local History, University of Leicester) on *Changing the Face of the Inquest 1725 - 1860*.

ECDL course start

Seminar hosted by OB Uni: Tony Ward (University of Hull) *Reflections on Experts and Diplomacy in the Courtier's Court*.

Seminar at OB Uni: Ian Burnay (Centre for the History of Science, Technology & Medicine, University of Manchester) *Of Bones and Pustion, Diseases in 19th Century Mexico-Legal History*.

Weekly meetings with supervisor begin, at History Department OB University, with constant email contact.

Project Start: 19/02/07

A guide to our services

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Project End