

Dr. Stuart Basten: Mapping fatal diseases in eighteenth-century London

The Wellcome Trust for the History and Understanding of Medicine recently funded an interdisciplinary two-year project entitled *Death, disease and the environment: contextualising individual causes of death in London, 1747-1825* which used sexton's books for the parish of St. Martin-in-the-Fields (population c. 42,000 in 1725) to uncover the links between cause of death and the environment using the available street level mortality data.

Effective mapping of these data were crucial to the success of the project and for both spatial analysis and effective dissemination of results. As such, a GIS solution was devised.

While contemporary mapping did exist, the quality was poor compared to later nineteenth-century Ordnance Survey representations. While these later maps allowed for more accurate spatial analysis, urban development in the intervening period meant that a number of significant alterations needed to be made.

This paper elucidates how a novel methodology was employed to create as accurate a representation of the eighteenth-century parish as possible by using a wide variety of historical maps. This is the first time such an exercise has been performed for a large eighteenth-century urban space and, as such, is methodologically important for future exercises of a similar nature. Preliminary results from the exercise will also be presented.