13.00-14.00, Tuesday 16 February 2016 Centre for Digital Scholarship Weston Library

Martin Maiden

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Digitizing meningitis: thirty years of sequencing the meningococcus

For more than two hundred years, meningococcal disease has been one of the most feared childhood infections, with epidemics occurring unpredictably. Many of these epidemics have been associated with periods of social disruption, such as the two world wars, or particular locations, including the African meningitis belt; however, there was a substantial unexpected and largely unexplained increase in disease in the UK from the early 1980s to around 2010. This period coincided with the development of novel genetic analysis approaches for studying bacterial diseases and this talk will chart the rise and fall of this epidemic focusing on the role of digital technologies in unravelling the mysteries of the meningococcus. This included improvements in our understanding the evolution of this elusive pathogen and the design and testing of novel vaccines. While much has been learned, we are yet to decisively beat meningococcal disease, and global sequence databases, such as the recently established Meningitis Research Foundation Meningococcus Genome Library, will continue to play a major role in improving disease control.

Register for this talk via http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/bodley/whats-on.

Martin Maiden is Professor of Molecular Epidemiology in the Department of Zoology, University of Oxford, a Fellow of the Royal College of Pathologists, visiting Professor the Department of Biosciences at the University of Cardiff, and a Fellow of the Society of Biology.

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Photo: Meningitis Research Foundation

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