However, like Gill, she takes a very 'internalist' approach to local history - as well as omitting footnotes and bibliography. Neither book gives the reader much information about Brighton's economy or society, a sad omission since both are cataloguing care for either the 'deserving' or 'undeserving' poor.

Margaret Keeling-Roberts' book is of a traditional hospital in Shrewsbury, and is in many ways a traditional, if uneven, history. Her research was prompted by the 1977 removal to new premises.

The gentry made an abortive attempt to found an infirmary in 1737. If this attempt had been successful, Royal Salop would have been either the first or second voluntary provincial hospital. Seven years later they were more successful, quoting in support of their efforts a half dozen provincial establishments which had sprung up in the meantime. They made particular use of Northampton, even sending their matron there for training, and yet the author does not explore this connection. However, she does give a clear account of the various committees as established, and of their respective functions. The hospital finally opened in 1747 and achieved a high wastage rate of matrons, even by eighteenth century standards. Most of its nursing history is standard; problems over night-watchers in the 1820s and Matron-Lady Superintendent relations in the 1870s. Although the nurses' diet was improved as late as 1896, and in the next two years meals were consumed in a separate dining room, a nurses' home was not constructed until 1907. This author, though a nurse, does not give as much information on nursing as the other books, but she does list her primary sources in the bibliography from which it appears that the hospital has a complete set of minute books and annual reports.

As a result of preparing lectures for nurse-learners on nursing and medical history, Margaret Currie continued her research into her local hospitals. This approach into unpromising material (after all the oldest 'real' hospital only dates from 1872) has led to the first area hospital history.(26) She gives details of fourteen or so hospitals - isolation, workhouse, children's, maternity, cottage and general - in South Bedfordshire, often including plans and photographs. Even a small temporary hospital for First World War officers merits a mention. The breadth and fullness of information on these various institutions makes it more a local reference book than a mere chronological history. Not only in the number of hospitals recorded does she show breadth but also in her 'externalist' approach - both local and national trends are covered. Even the number of Second World War air-raids is recorded as the government made the mistake of sending London hospitals evacuees to Luton, itself a strategic target. She makes use of all the orthodox local historical sources, including the latest available census returns, but refers to them in the text rather than in footnotes and bibliography. Again, unfortunately, she does not list or comment on the completeness of hospital sources. A content weakness is the coverage of the workhouse hospital, particularly nursing, but to be fair this may well be explained by a paucity of sources.

However, she has compressed a remarkable amount of information into a mere 162 pages and, in writing a history of the transition from cottage to district hospital, she has mirrored the Luton area's growth from a rural