

The **BBVA Foundation** and the **Spanish National Research Council (CSIC)**  
are pleased to invite you to the lecture:

## ***Sanitary Investment and the Decline of Mortality in England and Wales, 1817-1914***

**Bernard Harris**

**Professor of Social Policy and Head of School, School of Social Work and Social Policy, University of Strathclyde,  
United Kingdom.**

### **Summary:**

The relationship between sanitary intervention and mortality decline is one of the most fundamental and enduring debates in the fields of economic, social, demographic and medical history. In Britain, one of the major challenges posed by this debate is the challenge of measuring "sanitary effort". I will seek to address this challenge by providing new estimates of the value of the loans which were sought by local authorities and other organizations from the early-nineteenth century onwards. Previous authors have highlighted the increase in the value of the loans which were sanctioned by central government departments after 1870. In this lecture, I will provide a more detailed account of the distribution of these loans and the purposes for which they were intended, and present new data on the value of the loans which were either sanctioned by central government or approved by Parliament throughout the whole of the period from 1817 to 1914. I will also discuss the relationship between the timing of these loans and the decline of mortality in a group of areas which have previously been identified as making a disproportionate contribution to the decline of mortality during the last forty years of the nineteenth century. Three of these areas – Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester and Prestwich – requested permission to borrow large amounts of money for sanitary and related purposes shortly before mortality rates started to decline, but this was not true of all areas. The findings highlight the complex nature of the relationship between sanitary expenditure and mortality change in different areas during this period.

### **Biography:**

Bernard Harris is Professor of Social Policy and Head of the School of Social Work and Social Policy at the University of Strathclyde. He trained as a historian and has published on a wide range of topics covering different aspects of anthropometric and demographic history, as well as the history of social policy and welfare provision. His books include *The Health of the Schoolchild: A History of the School Medical Service in England and Wales* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995); *The Origins of the British Welfare State: State, Society and Social Welfare in England and Wales, 1800-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004); and (with Roderick Floud, Robert Fogel and Sok Chul Hong) *The Changing Body: Health, Nutrition and Human Development in the Western World since 1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Much of his recent work has focused on the history of mutual aid and the development of the welfare state and on the impact of sanitary reform on mortality during the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

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The lecture series also forms part of the Postgraduate Courses run by the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC).

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**The lecture will be delivered in English without translation**