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HIDDEN HISTORIES:

Discovering Disability in Norwich's Museum Collections

A research project for
Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service
by **Jonathan Tooke**

Front Cover:

A Nineteenth Century plaster cast of head of ' Callander, a Hydrocephalic patient who was some years in St Thomas' hospital, London' . NWHCM :1839.107 : A

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I would like to thank the following people, without whose help, advice, and suggestions, I would have been very lost indeed:

Ruth Fleming, Hannah Maddox, Ruth Battersby Tooke, Fiona Ford, Trish Irwin, Tony Irwin, Nigel Larkin, Helen Renton, John Renton, Kate Thaxton, Norma Watt, Francesca Vanke-Altman, Amy Bracey, Alan West, Tim Pestell, Martin Warren, and Lynda Wix.

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Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service is a partnership between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk's district councils, funded through council tax, earned income and grants.

Foreword

What is a “hidden history”? Is it something we are ashamed of or a wonderful secret? I think it is both. I think there are some wonderful secrets in our museum collections, and we should perhaps be ashamed that we have not acknowledged them until now.

Museum objects are evidence of our shared culture and heritage, the physical embodiment of our society. However, interpretation in museums rarely tells stories that are representative of society. Many people are marginalised through physical or mental disability, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or social class. But the objects themselves contain “hidden histories”, capable of telling the stories of people who are not represented in museum displays.

Some disabilities are far from hidden, indeed are celebrated. Horatio Nelson is recognised throughout the world for having an eye patch and one empty sleeve tucked into his jacket. Van Gogh’s mental illness is recognised as an integral part of his artistic genius. Monet’s cataracts affected his use of colour in his later paintings and resulted in a vibrant visual experience.

This project is about uncovering the hidden histories of people with disabilities, thereby revealing fascinating insights into our culture and enabling more people to see themselves in our museums and enjoy our services. It is about cultural entitlement, the right everyone has to contribute to and share in our cultural heritage.

We have found out that the Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service has a wide range of collections reflecting the experience of living with a disability from fine art to shoes. All the Norwich museum collections were involved in the initial survey, even Natural History. One of our most famous geology specimens, the West Runton elephant, was disabled and died an early death due to a leg injury.

This is all part of ongoing work to improve access to collections and services. It has inspired staff to revisit collections and augment

documentation with a wider range of information. In addition to identifying objects already in our collections the project has given us ideas for contemporary collecting that will better reflect society today and bring older stories up to date. We hope that this will feed into an online exhibition as well as inform future displays in our museums.

This work is being supported by our Access Advisory Group and funded through the Renaissance in the Regions programme. It is very appropriate that the Renaissance strap-line is “museums for changing lives”. We trust that Hidden Histories will change people’s lives and perceptions.

Vanessa Trevelyan

Head of Museums

Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service

June 2006

THE HOUSE WAS PAINTED ON THE BELLEVUE WAS UPON THAT HOUSE
RULIER HAVE SEEN IT BELLEVUE WAS UPON THAT HOUSE
FOR YEARS THIS IS BELLEVUE WORKHOUSE CASTLE ROAD
VAUDEVILLE A HOUSE AT CAISTER ABOUT THE SECOND HOUSE

PAST THE CATHOLIC CEMETERY CASTLE ROAD CAP PURDY
OWNER HE LIVES IN A HOUSE ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE FACING
VAUDEVILLE M^{rs} MARY ANN WRIGHT AND HER HUSBAND LIVED
IN VAUDEVILLE HOUSE NO CHILDREN SHE IS LEFT HANDED HONEST
HER HUSBAND WAS A FISHERMAN HER MAIDEN NAME ANN
HER MOTHERS NAME SOPHIA ANNISON GENEVE TERRACE
CROWN ROAD NAPOLEON PLACE JETTY ROAD THE TOBACCON
SHOP KEPT BY BANASCHINA AN ITALIAN WITH A STATUETTE
OF NAPOLEON ON THE FRONT OF THE SHOP AND IN THE SAME ROW
OUTSIDE A PUBLIC HOUSE AN ADVERTISEMENT IN FRENCH PAINTED
OVER THE SHOP WINDOW ALL THESE HOUSES BELONG TO THE
FRENCH AND CREMORNE PLACE FRIARS LANE KING STREET ALL
ING VARMOUTH NORFOLK BELLEVUE HOUSE CROMER NORFOLK
LOOK TO SIDESTRAND OVERSTRAND AND BACTON NORFOLK COAST
VAUDEVILLE THEATRE LONDON CREMORNE GARDENS LONDON

BELLEVUE HOUSE GORLESTON SUFFOLK BELLEVUE HOUSE
LOWESTOFT SUFFOLK LOOK TO SOUTHWOLD SUFFOLK FELIX
HUNSTANTON CORTON AND PAKEFIELD N^o LOWESTOFT I MISS
LORINA BULWER LIVED AT BECCLES SUFFOLK WAS EDUCATED
THERE UNTILL ABOUT SEVENTEEN YEARS OF AGE THEN CAME
TO G^o VARMOUTH NORFOLK TO LIVE BENACRE IS A NORMAN
VILLAGE A FEW MILES FROM BECCLES SUFFOLK IN THE SAME
COUNTY SIR THOS SHERLOCK GOCH BAR LIVED AT BENACRE
HALL RE^o DASHWOOD HAD A VAULT THERE BURIED WITH HIS WIFE
L. DASHWOOD E^o SURGEON NORWICH NORFOLK WAS THEIR SON
G^o DASHWOOD E^o SURGEON G^o VARMOUTH NORFOLK G^o DASHWOOD
E^o A CLERGYMAN WITH AN ONLY DAUGHTER WHO MARRIED RE^o
KERRISON WHO DIED HER SECOND HUSBAND THERE IS ALSO A
CLERGYMAN M^{rs} DASHWOOD THE MOTHER OF THE ABOVE FAMILY
HER MAIDEN NAME BURTON LIVED YEARS AGO AT THE
DEANERY G^o VARMOUTH NORFOLK A MOST AMIABLE LADY
NOT RELATED TO ANY OF THE BURTONS OF G^o VARMOUTH NORFOLK
OR NORWICH RE^o DASHWOOD LIVED IN A HOUSE CLOSE TO M^{rs} W^o
BULWER WIFE OF A FAMILY AT BECCLES SUFFOLK M^{rs} DASHWOOD
MOST OF HER AFTERNOONS THERE CONVERGING WITH M^{rs} W^o
BULWER ANN HEAR ME HER DEAR LITTLE LORINA REPEAT HER
SPELL - CAT ALSO TO COUNT IN TIME M^{rs} DASHWOOD TAUGHT
LORINA BULWER THE PIANO FORTE NOTES M^{rs} DASHWOOD TAUGHT
ME MUSIC IN HER HOUSE M^{rs} DASHWOOD HAD A PIANO & HARP

M^{rs} DASHWOOD BOUGHT ME A MUSIC BOOK AT JARROLD'S STATIONER
NORWICH WHEN SHE WAS STAYING AT HER SONS RESIDENCE
LANCLOT DASHWOOD E^o SURGEON NORWICH M^{rs} DASHWOOD

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Introduction

NMAS's Disability Access Advisory Group, aware of other similar studies and of the absence of material about disability on display, identified the need to undertake the *Hidden Histories* project. Hub partner Colchester Museum has already carried out a year long examination of disability in their collections and the University of Leicester produced the six-month study *Buried in the Footnotes*. By comparison, *Hidden Histories* six-week remit makes it an initial survey of the material we have in the Norwich Museums collections and the potential it may have for research or inclusion in exhibitions and displays.

The importance of studies such as *Hidden Histories* goes beyond simply discovering the presence or absence of material relating to a specific but neglected area in a collection. Themes originated outside of collection are useful for testing existing documentation, identifying areas that could be improved. They encourage the intellectual and creative use of collections, opening up a range of

interpretations and meanings. Submerged relationships between diverse objects from different collections emerge, again informing new meanings and possibilities for interpretation.

Unavoidably, it seems, projects of this sort are met with a sense of dread, a feeling that they originate from a dull sense of duty, worthiness, or political correctness. Coupled with this is a reluctance to look at subjects like disability that can be painful or disturbing and may not appear to have a 'positive message': sensitivity is just as effective as prejudice in the hiding of uncomfortable histories. The attitude that treating disability as a theme for a research project isolates it and thereby exacerbates the problem of difference and exclusion was also common. But it is only by paying attention to these areas initially that subsequent integration can become possible, and the stories that have been hidden can be told alongside the majority as part of an extended and complex range of human experience.

Aims and Methodology

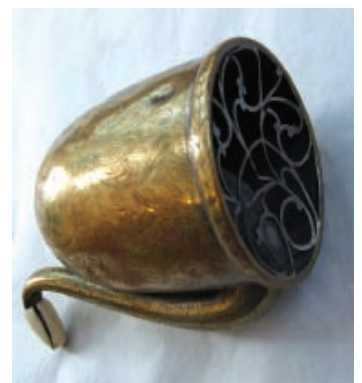
The Norwich Museums pilot project *Hidden Histories* ran for a limited time span of six weeks and, with this in view, expected some basic outcomes:

- Find out what presence disabilities had in the collections.
- To produce a terms list and user guide.
- To survey the collections to discover objects/stories that relate to the lives of disabled people.
- To gather material for a possible exhibition.
- To make recommendations for further research that the collections may suggest.
- To make recommendations for documentation to make this theme more accessible.

Initial searches were made using the Norfolk Museums online database, and subsequently

broadened using dedicated Modes files on the museum's shared drive. To begin with, searches were made using the limited set of search terms identified by the University of Leicester's study *Buried in the Footnotes*:

- Disabled/disability
- Blind
- Lamé
- Surgical
- Cripple
- Dwarf
- Giant
- Lunatic
- Invalid
- Adapted
- Altered
- Crutch
- Peg-Leg



An Eighteenth Century brass ear trumpet from Strangers Hall collection stored at Carrow House.



Some victims of tropical parasites show off their new prosthetics. Part of the Regimental Museum's collection of photographs yet to be researched or documented.

It soon became apparent that these terms were insufficient. Documentation has been undertaken at many different periods in the Museum's history, by a diverse number of people with different agendas/reasons for making documents. Even if an object is specifically related to disability, the documentation rarely if ever records the fact. A Braille writer in the collection was documented as simply 'Braille Writer', with no reference to blindness or disability of any kind. Given the historical dynamic, the following terms were searched despite some of them appearing insensitive or even abusive, but which may have been used in contemporaneous documents:

- Charity
- Spastic
- Madness
- Handicapped
- Hunchback
- Dumb
- Cataract
- Mongol
- Imbecile
- Idiot
- Eccentric
- Freak
- Midget
- Encephalitis

- Hydrocephalic
- Eye-Patch
- Loony
- Cretin
- Bad
- Mental
- Elephantine
- Glass eye
- Club foot
- Dyslexia
- Prosthetic
- Braille

Results of these searches are in the appendices at the back of this document.

Interviewing the curators formed the second phase of the research. Curatorial input was essential for discovering any qualitative material associated with objects, knowledge of any ephemera connected with objects, and items that were beyond the capabilities of database research (e.g. as yet undocumented material). The interviews were conducted on an informal basis; the curators contacted well in advance and were asked to think about the following question areas:

- Do you know of any objects in the collections that reveal anything about living with a disability either historically or contemporaneously?
- Are there any collectors with a disability that have donated objects to your collections, and are there any stories relating to them?
- If there are few objects that relate to disability in your collections, why do you think this may be?
- Could a lack of such objects and evidence reveal anything about the ways in which we choose to remember, document, and display the past as a culture?
- What difficulties could you foresee in attempting to organise a display of this material?



A Toby Tea Pot from the Decorative Arts Collection. The spout is a wooden leg.

Transcripts from notes taken at interviews can be found at the back of this document in the Appendices.

How histories get hidden: explaining lack in the collections

The Norwich museums collections are extensive. Since 1825, objects from all over the world have found their way into the collections as purchases or donations. However, amongst the many thousands of tonnes of material held, disability and the attendant equipment that often accompanies it, makes up only a minute percentage of the collections as a whole. There are general reasons why this could be: the lack of such objects reflects the proportion of society with disability in comparison with those without, or the perception that disability is a peripheral area and has therefore fewer objects relating to it within the collection. Interviewing the curators, however, revealed collection specific reasons why this is the case, and is directly related to the nature of the collections and why they were made in their initial instant. Some possible explanations:

Archaeology:

- Decay - archaeological remains/evidence far from complete. Difficult to tell gender let alone other details. Despite this, some pathological evidence survives rarely



Section of Lorina Bulwer's Sampler from the Textiles collection at Carrow House.

- Physical reality very different from now - infant mortality very high, low life expectancy - not likely to survive if disabled.
- Not intrinsic part of agenda for collected material - will only be reported/remarked upon if evidence comes to light to suggest it.

Natural History/Geology:

- Not intrinsic part of agenda for area of collecting/ study - there are exceptions - The West Runton Elephant had a damaged rear leg that it survived with for about eighteen months before becoming trapped in mud - possibility it enjoyed the river because the water took the weight off the leg.
- Collectors - if they were disabled it is unlikely that this will be explicitly documented, especially if the disability itself did not hinder them in the area that they collected. Biographical details in the documentation need to be improved upon. Possible link between nature of collecting/ collectors and compulsive disorders.

Fine Art:

- Collection made of Norwich School artists and major movements in art. Disability not part of collections policy. Will not acquire work on basis of disability but on whether the work is up to standard to be included in the collection.
- Disability only registers when used as a subject - often a romanticised view of disability.
- If collectors are disabled, it is not likely to be recorded or even deemed relevant in terms of the collection.
- Mental health issues only mentioned when they may have been an inspiration/or affected work in some way c.f. John Joseph Cotman and Thorpe St Andrews Hospital.

Decorative Art:

- Not part of collections policy.
- Rarely used as subject for decorative objects - there are rare exceptions.
- Disability in collectors unlikely to be recorded or deemed relevant.
- Objects that do use disability as a subject are rarely sensitive and tend to confirm cultural stereotypes.
- Disability incidental in subject as with collection of Nelsonalia.

Regimental Collection:

- Collection made initially by regiments - unlikely to collect anything that may detract from death/glory/hero narratives.
- Unlikely to dwell on the 'messy histories' of those who returned home disabled after the war.
- Objects such as prosthetic limbs, glass eyes,

mental health clothing, tell uncomfortable narratives.

- Difficult to display objects without complicity with 'freak show' elements - e.g. history of plastic surgery - challenging/disturbing images - possibility of claims of voyeurism/reaffirming disabled histories as proscribed/secret/not to be examined.

Bridewell:

- Collection established by captains of industry wishing to celebrate local manufacturers - unlikely to collect/display anything that may contradict narrative of industrial glory or show negative effects of industry/industrial accidents.
- Public/institutional stories not personal narratives.

Strangers Hall:

- Disability incidental to collection - broad social history focused collection policy.
- Objects/equipment associated with disability rarely attractive - not thought of as suitable items to donate to museum.
- Reluctance to make displays of objects - audience, problem of making spectacle of disability, not useful to make display - integration/ context given to objects is possible answer.

Carrow:

- Uncomfortable narratives - mental health costumes for violent patients.
- Lack of information with objects e.g. photographs
- Small part of massive collection - overlooked in favour of more glamorous stories/perspectives.
- Few objects not deemed suitable/sufficient enough for display.
- Objects not attractive.

Terms list and User Guide:

The following list of terms show only search words that returned some hits. Those words searched that scored hits that were not relevant to the project, such as window blinds for the search term 'blind', have been omitted.

- Disability/disabled 2
- Blind 1
- Surgical 2
- Dwarf 3
- Giant 2
- Asylum 10
- Wheel/invalid chair 12
- Lunatic 1
- Invalid 18
- Mental health 4
- Medical aid 62 (of which approx 18 relevant)
- Crutch 22
- Idiot 1 (although two others known in Phrenology collection: Idiot Boy and Girl)
- Charity 2
- Braille 2
- Midget 1

This list will only gather material that has been documented in such a way that explicitly mentions the search term used. Until the collections have been more fully investigated and the documentation tagged, important and interesting objects like John Craske's Dunkirk tapestry (*pictured right*, NWHCM : 1944.126 : T) will remain difficult to find, despite being described in the original records as a "Shell Shock sufferer".



Recommendations: areas of potential interest/development

Documentation and Context:

A common fear amongst the curatorial staff was the problem of display. How is it possible to stay clear of accusations of reaffirming 'freak show' elements when a fundamental aspect of the museum experience relies on spectacle, literally 'making an exhibition of' something? This is especially important when displaying material that may be disturbing (war wounds, plastic surgery, mental health clothing): if it has to be cordoned off does this proscribed aspect predetermine an experience as an act of voyeurism? These are difficult questions and raise issues that need to be negotiated by individual curators when they arise and as such, solid conclusions are beyond the scope of this document. However, context and integration are useful starting points for lessening freak show elements, by ensuring that the people represented inhabit more than the limits of their disability.

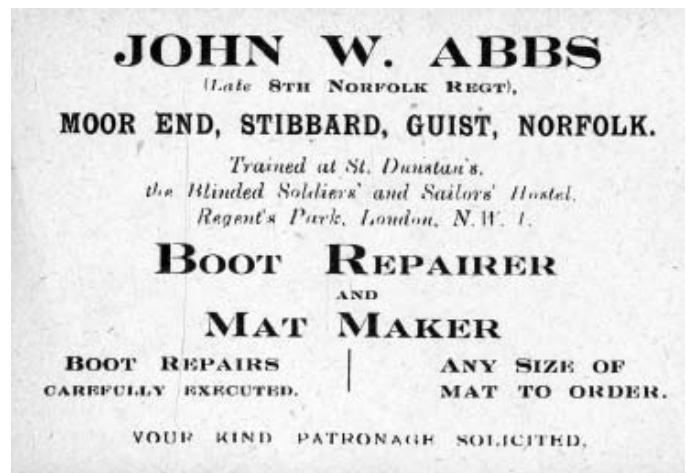
Example: J.W. Abbs

- Braille Watch awarded to J.W. Abbs on being 'invalided' out of the army following the loss of his sight during the Somme in 1916.
- Bald Modes record no reference made to associated contextual material such as...

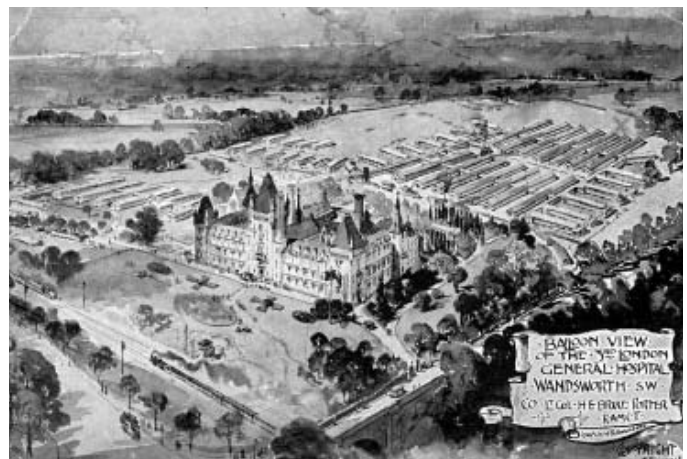


J.W. Abbs in uniform.

- ...his business card



- The hospital he was sent to



These images were augmented by information his niece has submitted and research carried out in the Regimental Museum. The addition of context in the form of images and biographical details has given the watch a much greater impact and potential for research and general interest. With fuller documentation, the abstract information that a soldier called J.W. Abbs was blinded and subsequently invalided out of the army can be given added meaning/significance if the associated material is accessible within the document under an Associated Record field.

Recommendations for further research/development:

Thorpe St Andrews Asylum:

- Diverse objects from across the collections could be linked through documentation, such as those relating to Thorpe St Andrews Asylum.
- The theme could be developed e.g. the relationship between a city and its sense of the other on its periphery; how we define ourselves against 'abnormal' mental states; the example of J.J. Cotman, often in St Andrews, and the dialogue between the normal/abnormal, a cultural exchange



View of St Andrews Hospital by John Thirtle from Fine Arts collection.



Above; clockwise from left: Mental Health shirt, detail of Mental Health shirt showing screw-down fastening, stitched St Andrews Hospital initials on petticoat.



The Riverside at Carrow by John Joseph Cotman - a regular intern at St Andrews Hospital.

Colonel Knights Collection of photographs:

- Collection of photographs showing life and practices in tropical WWII camp. Many suffered from ulcers caused by parasites and had to have lower legs removed. The photographs show some early Physiotherapy in practice as well as the leg removal machine and the camp's inhabitants wearing prosthetic limbs. Some additional information from newspaper clippings. Yet to be documented.
- Could be used for research on Disability and War i.e. changing attitudes towards people returning from war with disabilities; history of Physiotherapy, plastic surgery, prosthetic engineering; presenting alternative history of war with complicated narratives rather than the clean death/glory narratives favoured by many.



Phrenological Collection:

Documentation for Phrenology collection makes no reference to the presence of disability within the collection.

- Heads themselves are probably medical models taken from life rather than the death masks of the criminal collection. There is a good sense here of objectifying disability i.e. the scientist/doctor working with an object of study rather than subjective human experience.
- Possible area for further exploration: Phrenology as a practice (especially with our collection of executed criminals) aimed to explain a mental/social problem with a physical difference-example of culturally seeking difference.

General recommendations:

- Improve existing documentation. Each object marked in the Classified Name fields with general area of disability e.g. physical disability &, and then more specific area & visual impairment & blindness. Also, each object marked again in the Classified Name field with HIDDEN HISTORIES tag.
- In comparison with most documentation projects, these objects are relatively few - less than a thousand objects out of the entire collections. This means only a small amount of investment is necessary to improve existing catalogues and revolutionise access to the objects held that are associated with this theme.
- Possibly the best way to improve contextual



information would be to obtain a certain amount of oral history to provide a subjective/qualitative angle to objects that may seem disturbing.

- Broadening the range of historical activity areas presented, e.g. in social history displays, to include disability; comprehensive survey of physical realities in the past; integration in displays rather than isolating disability as a specific area/group for exhibition.

Problems encountered during project:

- The project was not seen as relevant to the collecting agendas of some departments – the validity of the research was frequently questioned.
- The reasons for the research were perceived as political rather than as a response to evidence from within the collections – some were wary of ideas originating outside of collections and being retrospectively applied.
- Documentation: disability rarely directly referenced in existing documentation e.g. Braille writer record made no reference to the blind people for whom it was produced - another instance where blindness was not noted and Braille spelt with one 'L', making a database search for Braille inaccurate.

A comprehensive list of objects unearthed from each collection is listed in the appendix, however, I am sure there are many more yet to be discovered that have slipped through the net of my research.

Appendix:

Curators interview notes transcripts:

N.B. Transcripts are in note form only and are not be verbatim. No misrepresentation is intended and apologies are made in advance if they occur.

Archaeology Department:

Main points made:

- General high mortality in the past - death/illness/physical discomfort - part of everyday experience - very high infant mortality - rich or poor, had to be fit in order to survive.
- Medicine a luxury
- Material evidence in Archaeology dictated by what survives - very little material evidence survives because of decay - hence not a valid question in Archaeology.
- Mental health seldom makes mark in Archaeological record
- Burial meant that subject was ready to die - no conclusions can be drawn from physical condition of remains
- Some trepanned skulls in collection
- Possibility that silver votives in shape of area of body afflicted are in collection - (no returns)

Decorative Art Department:

- Nelson - high presence in collection - no arm in ceramics but often failure to include eye - patch.
- Hero - disability used as symbol of efforts in war - sacrifice.
- Mansion house dwarves - expression of cultural stereotype - dressed in menacing clothing as way of ridicule.
- Type of collection limits relevance of question of disability - pretty subjects generally, about wealthy/hero - those that are not are generally pejorative.
- Peg-leg Toby Tea Pot - amputees more common in 19C - soldiers/sailors - a novelty object.
- Issue of class - normal people slip through net in terms of material culture/historical documentation.
- Complicated attitude towards disability in the past - no homogenous attitude - disabled seen as deserving poor - preferential treatment in workhouses, but little documented or any material culture left over.

- Disability part of complex cultural relationships - attitudes derived from religion and disability - as punishment - not positive relationship.
- Aristocracy - inbreeding and attendant problems - Von Hapsburgs with enormous chins.
- Display - fear of replicating negative historical attitudes - freak show element.

Royal Norfolk Regimental Museum:

- Regimental history focuses on narratives of death/glory of the men and regiment - once outside the regiment, histories become dispersed and proliferate - messy histories not necessarily recorded.
- 20th C - two world wars irrevocably changed attitudes to disabled - war as mother of invention - physiotherapy/prosthetics/development and improvement of new equipment to deal with injuries sustained in war - new understanding of Post Traumatic Stress Disorders/Mental health issues - informs everyday medical practices.
- War dead - easy to deal with - acts of remembrance, clean graveyards, services etc
- Problems with exhibition - horrifying images - proscribed - problems with ethics - real people's medical records - voyeurism/ freak show aspects - balance needed between spectacle and sensitivity - context needed.
- Reluctance to collect material about the painful aspects of war - collecting agendas - why collections are made and by whom.

Fine Art department:

- Local collector Charles Fox - deaf/dumb - Civic portrait in St Andrews Hall - collected Nelsonalia.
- Alfred Munnings - had one eye.
- Cotman - manic depressive - regularly admitted to St Andrews Asylum in Thorpe
- Collection policy - disability not part of remit - not why collection was made therefore question irrelevant for Fine Art - meant to be a comprehensive/ representative collection of major art movements.
- Disability in collectors/donors not relevant when accessioning objects - not relevant to documentation.
- Art judged as art - disability not part of criteria.
- Rhinoceros in collection painted by W. Twiddy - without use of arms or feet

Geology department:

- West Runton Elephant - displaced Tibia - grew new socket for tibia.
- Survived for approx 18 months
- Disability is possible reason for fossilisation - trapped in mud and could not get out.
- Gressenhall – potential - workhouse captured vulnerable/disabled?
- Possibilities with biography - explorers who made Norwich Museum's collections.
- Collections giving people disabilities - arsenic powder used in past as preservative.
- Collecting and collectors - possible link with mental health - obsessive/repetitive behaviours.

Community History, Bridewell:

- Pharmaceutical collection-trade catalogue - glass eyes, limbs, bath chairs, wheelchairs - strictly medical model of disability.
- What is disability - range of possible definitions/angles to take – health - human experience of medicine, disability as result of industry, as result of war, born with disability, result of accident, disability that develops over time.
- Medicine about collecting and classifying illness - defining ranges of 'normal' and 'abnormal'.
- Shifts in attitudes towards disability: chemical approach, positive? /negative?
- Objects often index to physical discomfort – callipers - physical reaction in observer.
- Possible presence of charity ephemera in collections - Picture Norfolk.
- Pain, loss, grief - how do we as a culture deal with painful memories.
- Bridewell collections established by wealthy industrialists - collecting agenda – celebrates local industry not industrial accidents and results thereof.
- Why collections are made - same as any historical document - agendas of those in power rarely admit the narratives of the un-enfranchised.

Bridewell:

- Presence of rush matting made by the blind from special workshops.
- Disability often irrelevant to collections - not recorded.
- Is isolating disability necessarily a good or bad thing?

- Disability as result of industry - dust, machinery - not recorded or considered collectable.
- Attendant problems with presenting such material if it even existed.

Strangers Hall:

- Exhibition - no audience for exhibits focussed on disability - difficult unattractive subject.
- Options limited by lack of objects in collection.
- Sensitised area difficult to give proper treatment to in public arena.
- Equipment display would exacerbate sense of difference.
- Collecting agendas - passive collecting, relies on what is given, objects are sometimes not considered as objects one would donate to a museum, type of people who donate objects - class.
- Institutional objects rarely attractive - more recent move in equipment manufacturers to bring paraphernalia of disability in line with consumer objects - adds dynamic of desire c.f. very fine 18thC ear trumpets.
- Display means segregation - need context to ensure integration.

Comprehensive objects list:

General objects/stories:

- One of the founders of the Castle Museum, (?) Gurney, was blind and had tactile plans of the building made using raised sand lines.
- Natural History Volunteer was only able to pursue his favourite hobby – Entomology - after losing his arm in a threshing machine accident
- Anne Hull Grundy c.1927 – 1984

Mrs Hull Grundy, the daughter of a wealthy industrialist who was forced to flee Nazi Germany, started collecting jewellery at the age of 11. She became an invalid in her early twenties and organised a vast collecting operation from her bedroom. Although she collected over 2000 pieces of jewellery, she herself wore only her wedding ring. She was an authority on jewellery and wrote many articles for periodicals.

Mrs Hull Grundy donated most of her collection to the British Museum but also made donations to a further 60 museums around the country, donating to the Castle Museum from 1975 to 1983. She aimed to find the most appropriate home for each individual object and to add to existing collections. When she was buying the pieces she knew that they would be donated to museums; she was deliberately saving them for future generations. The Hull Grundy collection in the Castle Museum is mostly comprised of jewellery; brooches, many in the form of objects from the natural world, medallions, pendants and hair ornaments, fine eighteenth century paste and a wide range of mid to late nineteenth century pieces. Some of the jewellery is made of non-precious materials such as steel and human hair. Within the collection there are also decorative and souvenir objects such as bronze plaques, boxes and silver. There is also a collection of stoneware made by the four Martin brothers, London studio potters who produced distinctive work from the late 19th to the early 20th century. Some of the Hull Grundy collection is on display in the Fitch Room.

Archaeology Objects:

There are very few objects in the archaeology collections for reasons outlined by the curator in his interview. However, the following medical/phrenological casts of disabilities such as micro/hydrocephalic full head casts, are cared for by the Archaeology department:

NWHCM 1839.107 : A Cast of the head of an Idiot boy (p16)

NWHCM 1839.107 : A Cast of the head of an Idiot girl

NWHCM 1839.107 : A Full head cast of 'Callender, a Hydrocephalic patient who spent some years in St Thomas' hospital, London'.

NWHCM : 1839.107 : A. (Front cover, p16)

There are some other possible areas for research with the Phrenology collection: physical abnormality was sought as a means of identifying an individual as outside the range of 'normality', a physical manifestation of a mental proclivity.

Bridewell Objects:

NWHCM : 1980.443 : B/S

A smoker's bow chair set on wheels, elm seat, arms and back, legs probably beech, two large wheels one on either side, the wheels have inner wooden wheels for propelling the chair by hand, at the rear is a small wheel, the chair was found in the attic of the Crome Ward of the West Norwich Hospital and probably dates from the time when the hospital was a workhouse, circa 1880.

NWHCM : 1987.306 : B

G. Taylor and Son, 97 Upper St Giles street, 1900-1925 - small collection of shoe making tools for making surgical footwear.

NWHCM : 1994.78.1686

Medical catalogue - 1920's-30's (?) contains adverts for glass eyes, wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs and breasts.

Carrow Objects:

Includes collection of undocumented resource material: some tailor's patterns for clients with different disabilities e.g. "waistcoat for hunchback", "morning and dress coat for stooping figure". Also, samplers by Lorina Bulwer (mental health/workhouse) and John Craske (mental health/shell shock - tapestry of Dunkirk landings/rescue. More Biographical details available - used cross-stitch as therapy). There are a limited number of photographs in the collection depicting disabilities e.g. wheelchair user, family group including a child with Downs Syndrome (p26, 33).

NWHCM : 1973.268.1 : C strong dress of flowered cotton, wadded and quilted, long sleeves, inset belt, laced up the front from below waist, worn by violent patients in mental hospital so that they cannot tear them, no hem frill or fastenings

NWHCM : 1973.268.2 : C strong petticoat, double thickness of white jean, high round neck, knife pleated from waist, sleeveless, worn by violent patients in mental hospital so that they cannot tear them, no hem frill or fastenings (p15)

NWHCM : 1973.268.3 : C

NWHCM : 1973.268.4 : C shirt of strong sailcloth, u neck, stand collar, long sleeves, made like a fisherman's slop to wear outside, worn by violent patient in mental hospital so that they cannot tear them, locking fastening at neck (p15)

NWHCM : 1944.126 : T
Tapestry by shell shock victim and fisherman John Craske showing the evacuation of Dunkirk - unfinished (p13)

NWHCM : 1976.53.13 : C
Stump Sock to go over amputated area

NWHCM : 71.36 :
C O'Brien the Giant-shoe (see below)

NWHCM : 2004.824 : T
Sampler by Lorina Bulwer, c.1900. Made whilst in lunatic ward of Great Yarmouth workhouse. (p6, 11)



Decorative Arts Objects:

This collection is, I suspect, more extensive than what the Modes records have uncovered as disability and associated terms are unlikely to be used in Decorative Arts documentation. Decorative Arts also has a large collection of Nelsonalia.

NWHCM : 1992.226.1296 : D
Toby teapot in shape of man with wooden leg, which forms the spout (p11)

NWHCM : 1955.143.1 : D
NWHCM : 1955.143.2 : D
Mansion House Dwarves. Derby porcelain. Grotesque figures dressed in 18C 'Brigand Costume'. Rough base with flowers (see right)

Fine Art Objects:

NWHCM : 1891.11 : F
Blind Dan Painting

NWHCM : 1985.84.1 : F
drawing, 'The Vregany - Tales of the Lynn Dwarfs' by John Percival Chaplin (1906-1981), black ink and watercolour on paper

NWHCM : 1960.442 : F
drawing, 'The Invalid Critic or The Connoisseur and tired boy' by Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827)

NWHCM : 1954.138 : F
Norwich Asylum and School for the Blind, showing some of the inmates weaving, basket making and spinning

NWHCM : 1954.138 : F
print, 'Norwich Asylum and School for the Blind' by unknown, engraving on paper, undated; printed below subject 'NORWICH ASYLUM AND SCHOOL / FOR THE BLIND'

NWHCM : 1951.235.1352.B9 : F
'Sunset Landscape with Thorpe Hospital, Norwich' by John Thirtle (p15)

NWHCM : 1922.135.BH714A : F
artist : Harcourt, Bosworth W. drawing, 'Northfield Leicester Asylum in distance' by



Bosworth W. Harcourt (1836-1914), watercolour and pencil on paper, undated; 12.7 cm x 17.7 cm; inscription top left 'Northfield / Leicester Asylum / in distance'

NWHCM : 1954.138.FAW 843 : F
drawing, 'An Idiot at Pentney' possibly by William Taylor after Sir George Beaumont, pencil and wash on paper, undated

NWHCM : 1942.91.2 : F
drawing, 'Exotic Birds' by William Twiddy (1744-1745), pen and ink and grey wash on paper, 23 Feb 1745; 20.1 cm x 17.3 cm; inscription in ink along lower margin torn / wrote by ... 'Norwich Feby ye(?) 23d / 1745'; inscription in ink old backing board 'My Aunt Twiddy made / a Present of this Picture / to my Wife Elizh Christopher'

NWHCM : FAW 839 : F
Drawing, 'Rhinoceros' by William Twiddy, watercolour on paper, 1 Jun 1744; 16.6 cm x 20.4 cm; inscription in brown watercolour top left 'Rhinoceros'; inscription in brown watercolour bottom 'Drawn and wrote by / William Twiddy who never had the use of Hands or Feet / June 1st 1744'

J.J. Cotman - 117 paintings in collection and 1 portrait of him - in and out of Thorpe St Andrews Asylum for the duration of his life.

Royal Norfolk Regimental Collection Objects:

Photographs that have not yet been documented
- Colonel Knights collection; (p8, 10, 15, 30)

Plaque from St Andrews Hospital - Thorpe showing number of soldiers that passed through during WWI;

Examples of Invalid certificates' issued to those invalided out of the army;

Regimental cottages for invalided soldiers documentation in archive
Wounded/casualty book containing names/wounds/hospital where sent - research resource for Hidden Histories

NWHRM : 5350
bag by disabled soldier

Regimental: x3 Photographs for search Invalid:
NWHRM : 1026.62
wounded invalid band in India 1913-1916

NWHRM : 5158.3a
NWHRM : 5158.3b
photographic postcards showing invalid soldiers

NWHRM : 5581
Postcard of J. W. Abbs, blinded during WWI and awarded Braille Pocket Watch also in the collection (p14)

NWHRM : 5189.6
Photo of J. W. Abbs also 5189.2-6

NWHRM : 5189.1 Braille pocket watch awarded to J. W. Abbs
Also associated documents/context material

Strangers Hall Objects:

NWHCM : 1976.262 : S Surgical Boot belonging to Thomas Yaxley sufferer of Spina Bifida

NWHCM : 1973.380.11 : B/S
Card of committee of visitors, Norfolk County Asylum, giving names of visitors and months in attendance, 1903, from F. Crowe and Sons, printers of 11 Pottergate, Norwich, Norfolk

NWHCM : 1973.302.21 : B/S
Rule book of the Norfolk Lunatic Asylum, Thorpe, 27 printed pages, soft green paper covers, printed by F. Crowe and Son, Norwich, Norfolk, 1882

NWHCM : 1973.380.12 : B/S
Blank card for Norfolk County Asylum, 1900s, from F. Crowe and Sons, printers of 11 Pottergate, Norwich, Norfolk

NWHCM : 1976.485.14 : S surgical insoles

NWHCM : 1980.41.4 : S pair of Mother Brown's cream woollen knee caps with accompanying leaflet, knitted in garter stitch, diamond shape, about 1961

NWHCM : 1988.130.378 : S photograph showing child dwarf, caption on reverse reads 'General Mite, 16 Years Old Weighs Nine Pounds, he is bright, smart and intelligent and a perfect man in miniature'

NWHCM : 1988.130.379 : S photograph showing child dwarf, caption on reverse reads 'Greatest wonder of the Age!, Senorita Lucia Zarate, this young lady is 18 years of age and weighs only 4 and three quarter pounds, is perfect in form and feature, Tom Thumb is a giant compared with her, it is difficult to describe in words this wonderful Mexican Pigmy, this human curiosity must be seen and heard, and even then amazement does not cease', late 19th century

NWHCM : 1927.64 : S notice painted on canvas of Hales, the Norfolk giant

NWHCM : 1988.15 : S framed notice from Heigham Hall, reputed by the donor to be probably the last privately owned lunatic asylum in the country, removed when the building was demolished about 1960, notice reads, every patient has the right to have any letter sent unopened to the Board of Control, 66 Victoria Street, London, S.W.1., or to one of the Commissioners of the Board or to the Lord Chancellor or to the Minister of Health or to the person who signed the reception order and also to the person on whose petition such order was made, or to any chancery visitor or the judge who deals with property, every patient has the right to request a personal and private interview with a visiting Commissioner or visitor at any visit which may be made to the Institution, Heigham Hall, Norwich, black frame, glazed, about 1930

NWHCM : 1969.242.50 : S invalid carrier, length of carpet attached to 2 wooden rods, about 1900s

NWHCM : 1926.122 : S invalid chair, circ 1750 + seven other wheelchairs in collections at Strangers

NWHCM : 1966.155 : S ear trumpet, about 1900

NWHCM : 1969.242.2 : S ear trumpet, made from length of gas piping with brass earpiece

and copper horn, about 1920

NWHCM : 1969.242.10 : S Ear trumpet

NWHCM : 1966.261 : S pair of remedial braces in strong linen twill bound with linen tape, machine made, about 1860s

NWHCM : 1971.485.34 : S hearing aid with attached battery, Widney 25, made in Denmark, 1960s

NWHCM : 1974.334 : S pair of ladies black leather boots lace up fronts, stacked heels with a hole in the right shoe's heel for a calliper iron to pass through, lined with canvas, made by J. Buckingham and Sons of Norwich, 1940s or 1950s

NWHCM : 1976.13 : S brass ear trumpet with etched decoration and ivory ear piece, ornate silver grill over open end of trumpet, query 18th century (p9)

NWHCM : 1976.178.1 : S black bakelite extending ear trumpet in four sections, late 19th to early 20th century

NWHCM : 1976.178.24 : S pair of crutches made of wood with brass bands near the top and leather arm pads, late 19th to early 20th century

NWHCM : 1976.456 : S calliper and leg iron for small child, jointed at knee and ankle, leather ands which buckle round thigh and calf, leather boot attached, worn for a broken leg, adjustable for size of leg, right leg and foot, 1903

NWHCM : 1980.60 : S pair of crutches, pale mahogany, leather padded under-arm supports, spring to give resilience contained in brass barrel below rests, the wooden shaft divides either side of the horizontal hand support or grip and then closes once more to continue down as a round section shaft, all this formed out of the solid wood, one crutch has a leather ferrule at the end and on the other it is missing, about 1910

NWHCM : 1981.176.4 : S pair of bone and metal hearing devices in black leather case lined with wine velvet, early 20th century

NWHCM : 1985.144 : S optician's eye chart, wall chart consisting of four boards with fabric hinges and string for hanging, chart is illustrated with black and white line drawings of animals, children, toys etc, which diminish in size towards the bottom of the chart, chart is stamped Curry and Paxton Ltd, Dispensing Opticians London and Branches, about 1950

NWHCM : 1991.124.1 : S the Stainsby-Wayne Braille writer, made in two sections, hinged wooden board with row of holes at each side, top of board bears metal plate with maker's name, this is attached to hinged wooden strip which lifts up to reveal four small nails which grip the paper before writing takes place, the Braille making part of the machine consists of a long narrow wooden strip which fits across the board, there is a metal ratchet device for moving the Braille making carriage over the board, there are six small keys and one larger one which operate the pins which puncture holes in the paper, 1930s

Terms searched and number of hits:

Disability/disabled 2 hits 1 in Norwich Museum's collections

Asylum 10

Wheelchair 12

Blind 1

Deaf 0

Lame 0

Surgical 2

Cripple 0

Dwarf 3

Giant 2

Lunatic 1

Invalid 13

Deformed/deformity 0

Mental health 4

Impaired 0

Adapted 0

Medical aid 18 approx

Altered 0

Crutch 22

Modified 0

Peg Leg 0

Charity

Spastic 0

Madness 0

Handicapped 0

Hunchback 0

Dumb 0

Cataract 3 (not relevant- drawings of waterfalls)

Mongol 0

Imbecile 0

Idiot 1

Eccentric 3 (not relevant)

Freak 0

Midget 1 possible Caley's Midget Crackers

Encephalitis 0

Eye patch 0

Loony 0

Cretin 0

Bad 0

Mental 0

Elephantine 0

Glass Eye 4 (not relevant-glass eye baths by optrex)

Club foot 0

Charity 2

Dyslexia 0

Prosthetic 0

Braille 2

SHIC/NMAS classification/subject area terms used:

Classified Name Fields used with disability related Objects
(may be useful)

Personal life & personal well being & surgical support

Health & medical aids & crutches, surgical footwear

Community life & welfare

Community life & welfare and well being & health

Personal life & portraits

Personalia

Health & documentary material

Domestic life & travel & man-powered transport

Domestic life & family well being & nursing the family

Personal life & personal well being & hearing impairment

Health & medical aids & hearing aids

Working life & engineering & instrument engineering

Health & medical aids & crutches, surgical footwear

Community life & warfare and defence & campaigns

Community life & government & local government

Domestic life & toys



Examples of Hidden History documentation recommendations:

The simple addition in the CLASSIFIED NAME fields of a **HIDDEN HISTORIES** tag will enable the easy retrieval of objects related to the theme of disability. The addition of a further field in this area describing general area of disability, e.g. **mental health &**, and then more detailed information (if available) about the disability, e.g. **schizophrenia**, will further improve the accessibility of this material.

RECORD-NUMBER	NWHCM : 1988.130.378 : S
PHOTOGRAPHY	
REFERENCE-NUMBER	
ASSIGNED-NUMBER	130.988.378
IDENTIFICATION	
SIMPLE-NAME	photograph
FULL-NAME	b/w print (photograph)
CLASSIFIED-NAME	3 . 1 4
CLASSIFIED-NAME	personal life & portraits
CLASSIFIED-NAME	customs & commemorative & people
CLASSIFIED-NAME	entertainment & broadsheets, ballads etc
CLASSIFIED-NAME	photography & photographs
CLASSIFIED-NAME	physical disability & dwarf
CLASSIFIED-NAME	HIDDEN HISTORIES
BRIEF-DESCRIPTION	photograph showing child dwarf, caption on reverse reads General Mite, 16 Years Old Weighs Nine Pounds, he is bright, smart and intelligent and a perfect man in miniature, late 19th century
CONTENT-OUTLINE	
BRIEF-SUMMARY	Child dwarf
SIMPLE-CATEGORY	portrait
FULL-CATEGORY	portrait & dwarf
CONTENT-ANALYSIS	
PERSON	dwarf :
DATE	1850 = 1899
PRODUCTION	
PERSON	:
ACQUISITION	
METHOD	gift
DATE	1988
DESCRIPTION	
INSCRIPTION	inscription : : reverse : caption : GENERAL MITE 16 YEARS OLD / WEIGHS NINE POUNDS / He is bright, smart and intelligent, and a perfect man in miniature
PART.DIMEN.READING	::
PART.DIMEN.READING	::
PERMANENT-LOCATION	Strangers' Hall
CONTENT	
PERIOD	19th century
NOTE	century
PERIOD	Early Victorian & Late Victorian
NOTE	style period

RECORD-NUMBER	NWHCM : 1973.268.5 : S
PHOTOGRAPHY	
REFERENCE-NUMBER	
ASSIGNED-NUMBER	268.973.5
NUMBER-OF-ITEMS	2
IDENTIFICATION	
SIMPLE-NAME	boot
FULL-NAME	boot
CLASSIFIED-NAME	1 . 4 1 4
CLASSIFIED-NAME	community life & health
CLASSIFIED-NAME	health & medical aids & crutches, surgical footwear
CLASSIFIED-NAME	mental health & physical disability
CLASSIFIED-NAME	HIDDEN HISTORIES
BRIEF-DESCRIPTION	pair of black leather boots with black cloth tops, size 7, stamped STAH on instep for St. Andrew's Hospital, Thorpe
PRODUCTION	
CORPORATE-BODY	:
ASSOCIATION	
CORPORATE-BODY	:
ACQUISITION	
METHOD	gift
CORPORATE-BODY	from : St. Andrew's Hospital (Management Committee)
DATE	1973
DESCRIPTION	
MATERIAL	leather & cloth
COLOUR	black
INSCRIPTION	inscription : stamped : instep : : Size 7 STAH
PART.DIMEN.READING	: : 279 x 177 x 981 mm
DOCUMENTATION-GROUP	
REFERENCE	: : : :
PERMANENT-LOCATION	Strangers' Hall
CONTENT	

RECORD-NUMBER

NWHCM : 1891.11 : F

PHOTOGRAPHY**REFERENCE-NUMBER**

fineart\art2223.jpg

**ASSIGNED-NUMBER**

11.91

PRODUCTION**PERSON**

artist : Hawkes, W. (after Gerrard)

DATES

1812=1891 (active)

DATE

1812

IDENTIFICATION**TITLE**

Blind Dan

SIMPLE-NAME

drawing

FULL-NAME

watercolour

CLASSIFIED-NAME

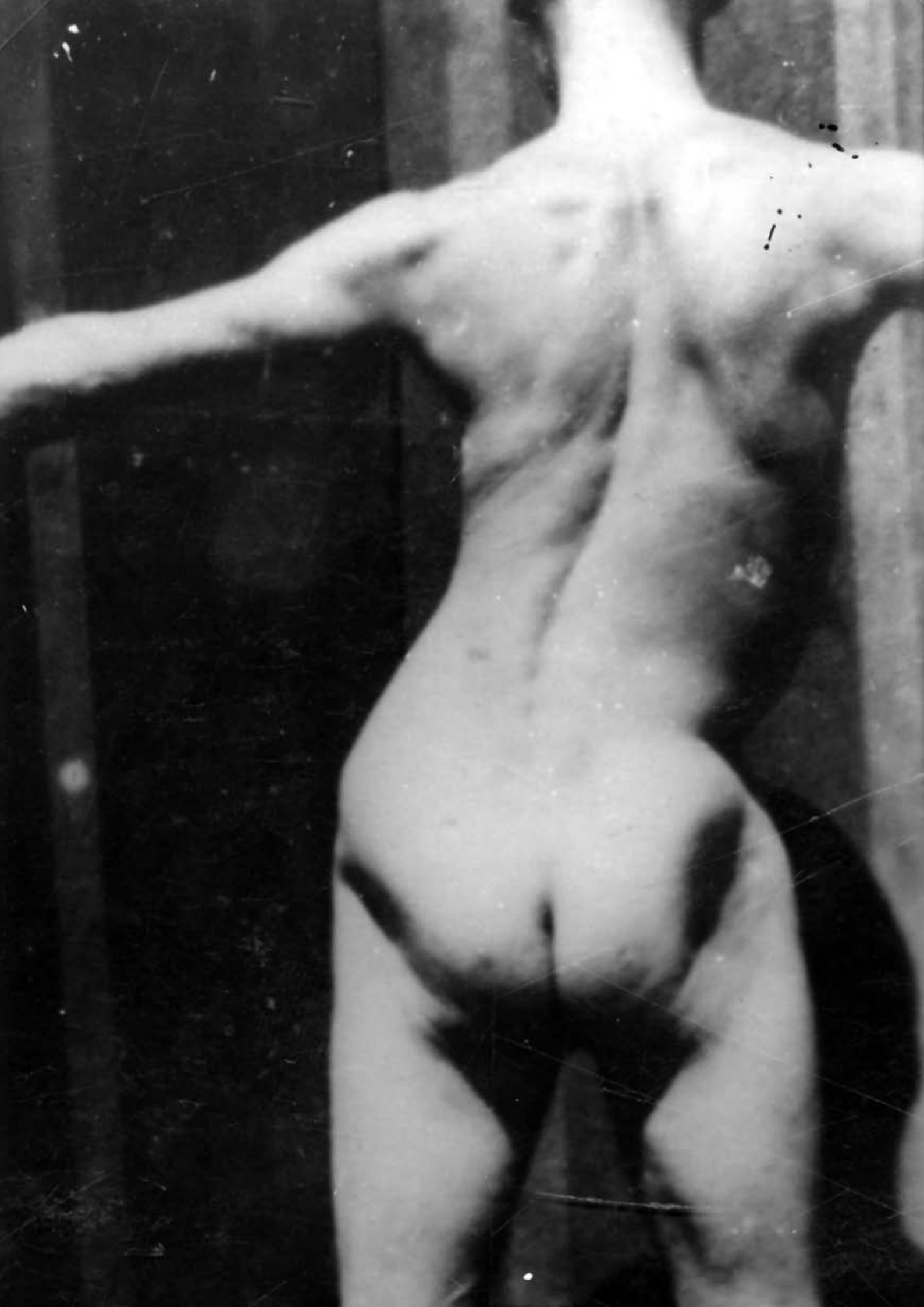
CLASSIFIED-NAME

CLASSIFIED-NAME

fine art & drawings

physical disability & blind

HIDDEN HISTORIES



BRIEF-DESCRIPTION

drawing, 'Blind Dan 1812' by W. Hawkes (1812-1891), watercolour on paper, 1812; 24.8 cm x 19.4 cm; inscription in artist's handwriting (?) signed and dated 'A portrait of an old celebrity of Norwich a blind man who for many years traversed its streets with almanacs, ballads etc. / the portrait was taken by a Mr. Gerrard about the year 1812 and by his permission I made this copy at that time / W. Hawkes'

DESCRIPTION

PART.ASPECT.DESC

support : material : paper

HEIGHT

24.8 cm

WIDTH

19.4 cm

INSCRIPTION

inscribed : in artist's handwriting (?) : : : A portrait of an old celebrity of Norwich a blind man who for many years traversed its streets with almanacs, ballads etc. / the portrait was taken by a Mr. Gerrard about the year 1812 and by his permission I made this copy at that time / W. Hawkes

ASSOCIATION

PERSON

artist : Gerrard, Mr

CONSERVATION

METHOD

mounted 16 x 22

ACQUISITION

METHOD

gift

DATE

1891

DOCUMENTATION-GROUP

DOCUMENTATION

HF (under Gerrard)

CONTENT-OUTLINE

BRIEF-SUMMARY

Portrait of Blind Dan, an old celebrity of Norwich, a blind man who for many years traversed its streets with almanacs, ballads etc, his portrait was taken by a Mr Gerrard about the year 1812 and copied by W. Hawkes.

SIMPLE-CATEGORY

portrait

FULL-CATEGORY

blind man

CLASSIFIED-CATEGORY

3 . 1 4

CONTENT-ANALYSIS

PERSON

sitter : Blind Dan

PLACE

& & Norwich & Norfolk & England

DATE

1812

PERMANENT-LOCATION

Norwich Castle Study Centre Shirehall (please ring for appointment to view)

PHOTOGRAPHY

CONTENT

PERIOD

1812

NOTE

date

PERIOD

1810s

NOTE

decade

PERIOD

19th century

NOTE



century

PERIOD

Late Georgian

NOTE

style period

PERIOD

1812

NOTE

date

PERIOD

1810s

NOTE

decade

PERIOD

19th century

NOTE

century

PERIOD

Late Georgian

NOTE

style period

List of Illustrations:

- Inside front cover** A Nineteenth Century plaster cast of head of 'Callander, a Hydrocephalic patient who was some years in St Thomas' hospital, London'. NWHCM : 1839.107 : A
- P6** Section of Lorina Bulwer's sampler. NWHCM : 2004.824 : T
- P8** Photograph from Colonel Knights collection
- P9** An Eighteenth Century brass ear trumpet from the Strangers Hall collection stored at Carrow House. NWHCM : 1976.13 : S
- P10** Photograph from Colonel Knights collection
- P11** (*top*) A Toby Tea Pot from the Decorative Arts Collection. The spout is a wooden leg. NWHCM : 1992.226.1296 : D
(*bottom*) A section of Lorina Bulwer's sampler from the Textiles collection at Carrow House. NWHCM : 2004.824 : T
- P13** Details from John Craske's tapestry. NWHCM : 1944.126 : T
- P14** (*left*) Photograph of J W Abbs (*right, above*) J W Abbs's business card (*right, below*) painting of General Hospital, Wandsworth
- P15** (*above; clockwise, from left*): Mental Health shirt, detail of Mental Health shirt showing screw-down fastening, stitched St Andrews Hospital initials on petticoat. NWHCM : 1973.268 : C
The River at Carrow with the Devil's Tower, 1874 by John Joseph Cotman. NWHCM : 1921.21.18 : F
View of St Andrews Hospital c.1828 by John Thirtle, from the Fine Art collections. NWHCM : 1951.235.1352.B9 : F
- P16** (*bottom left*) Life mask of individual known as 'Idiot Boy'. NWHCM : 1839.107.1 : A (*top right*) Detail of life mask (see front cover). NWHCM 1839.107 : A
- P20** Shoe belonging to O'Brien, 'the Irish Giant'. NWHCM : 71.36 : C
- P21** Mansion House Dwarf. NWHCM : 1955.143 : D
- P26** Unknown family group photograph
- P30** Photograph from Colonel Knights collection
- P33** Photograph of unknown individual in wheelchair

Illustrations on the front cover, and pages 9, 11 (top), 13, 15-16, and 21 by Jonathan Tooke.

To search the collections, go to www.norfolk.museums.gov.uk

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