

Psychiatry in pictures

EDITED BY ALLAN BEVERIDGE

Do you have an image, preferably accompanied by 100 to 200 words of explanatory text, that you think would be suitable for Psychiatry in Pictures? Submissions are very welcome and should be sent direct to Dr Allan Beveridge, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0SU, UK.



Richard Dadd (1817–1886). *Sir Alexander Morison (1852)*

This splendid portrait of Sir Alexander Morison by Richard Dadd represents a curious image from the history of psychiatry. Morison was a 19th-century Scottish doctor who championed the doctrine of physiognomy, the belief that a patient's facial expression revealed the underlying mental condition. In this picture, Morison's own physiognomy is under examination, on this occasion by an asylum inmate, Richard Dadd, the celebrated Victorian painter who developed a psychotic illness and spent much of his adult life in Bethlem and Broadmoor. Morison had been appointed Consulting Physician to the Bethlem in 1835 and it was there that he met Dadd. The artist completed this portrait of Morison in 1852 and it now hangs in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. On the back of the canvas, Dadd has written, 'Portrait of Sir Alexander Morison M.D., the background by a sketch made by his daughter Ann. Richard Dadd, pinxit, 1852'. It shows Morison standing in the grounds of Anchorfield, his childhood home on the shores of the Firth of Forth. Dadd, of course, would never have seen the original landscape, but he used the sketch by Morison's daughter to create a rather strange scene in which can be seen sailing ships on the Fife coastline and two Newhaven fishwives. Morison himself looks weary and somewhat sad. He was 73 years old, his wife of nearly 50 years had recently died, and his retirement from Bethlem had been a forced one. In subsequent months images will be presented from Morison's 1840 book *The Physiognomy of Mental Diseases*. Image reproduced courtesy of The Scottish National Portrait Gallery. With thanks to Iain Milne, Head of Library and Information Services, and John Dallas, Rare Books Librarian, Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh.