

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.



William Bartholomew (1819–1881), untitled

William Bartholomew was admitted to the Southern Counties Asylum (the pauper section of the Crichton) in 1853, having previously been a patient at the Royal Edinburgh Asylum. He was 34 years old, unmarried and his occupation was given as 'engraver'. Over the following years he was to have several admissions to the Crichton and Edinburgh asylums. The case notes reveal that he suffered from bouts of mania and melancholia as well as intemperance. During his asylum residence he created many works of art, including this ink drawing. The language employed by the Crichton asylum doctors is very evocative and this passage, written in 1857, gives an eloquent account of Bartholomew's mental condition as well as commenting on his creative output. 'He was then restless, voluble, ambitious disposed to dispute authority, incoherent. His confusion possessed however that wild magnificence that semblance to eloquence and subtle disquisition or humorous illustration which intoxicated and delirious men sometimes exhibit. His drawings possessed similar qualities clever but incongruous, absurd and mythical; generally blurred by whatever pigment the floor, or flowers provided. His habits wild erratic degraded and destructive furnished a fertile source of disquietude with the authorities: and gave to his aspect an air of shabby gentility which no care or command could prevent'. Bartholomew died in the Royal Edinburgh Asylum in 1881.

Thanks to Morag Williams, Archivist to NHS Dumfries and Galloway, Solway House, Crichton Royal Hospital, Dumfries.