

# The People who Families Forget: stories of asylum inmates

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## Records

County Asylum records at County Archives, some are becoming available online. Records of the Royal Bethlem Hospital (National Lunatic Asylum) at the National Archives, some available on FindmyPast. These include Admissions' Registers for 1683-1932, Minutes of the Court of Governors 1559-1689, Incurable Patient Admissions Registers' 1723-1919, Discharge and Death Books for 1782-1906 and Patient Case Books which date from 1815-1919. These give information about the name, address, occupation, age and religion of the patients.

<https://search.findmypast.co.uk/search-world-records/london-bethlem-hospital-patient-admission-registers-and-casebooks-1683-1932>

See also <https://britishonlinearchives.com/collections/104/records-from-bethlem-royal-hospital-1559-1932>

There is more information about the archives of Bethlem Hospital at The Museum of the Mind: Bethlem Hospital <https://museumofthemind.org.uk/>

MH94 Registers of the Commission of Lunacy 1846-1960 at the National Archives available on Ancestry up to 1912 [www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9051/](http://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9051/)

HO20 Criminal Lunatic Asylum Registers 1800-1843 at the National Archives available on Ancestry [www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9163/](http://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9163/)

HO145 Criminal Lunacy and Warrant Entry Books 1882-1898 at the National Archives available on Ancestry [www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9162/](http://www.ancestry.co.uk/search/collections/9162/)

## Further Reading

Arnold, Catharine *Bedlam: London and its mad* (Simon & Schuster 2009)

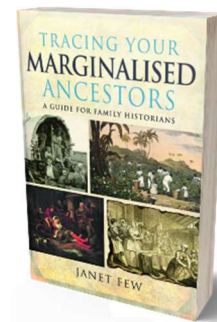
Burtinshaw, Kathryn and Burt, Dr John *Lunatics, Imbeciles and Idiots: a history of insanity in nineteenth century Britain and Ireland* (Pen & Sword 2017)

Chambers, Paul *Bedlam: London's hospital from the mad* (Ian Allen Publishing 2009)

Chater, Kathy *My Ancestor was a Lunatic: a guide to sources for family historians* (Pen & Sword 2014)

Davis, Mark *Voices from the Asylum: West Riding pauper lunatic asylum* (Amberley Publishing 2013)

Few, Janet *Tracing your Marginalised Ancestors* (Pen and Sword 2024)



Finnane, Mark *Insanity and the Insane in Post-famine Ireland* (Rowman and Littlefield 1981)

Grogan, Susie *Shell-shocked Britain: the first world war's legacy for Britain's mental health* (Pen & Sword 2014)

Houston, R A *Madness and Society in Eighteenth Century Scotland* (OUP 2000)

Ingram, Allan (ed.) *Patterns of Madness in the Eighteenth Century: a reader* (Liverpool University Press 1998)

Jones, Kathleen *Law and conscience, 1744-1845: the social history of the care of the insane* (Routledge & Kegan Paul 1955)

Lockley, Diane *The House of Cure: life within the Leicestershire lunatic asylum* (Anchorprint 2011)

Parry-Jones, William Llywelyn *The Trade in Lunacy: a study of private madhouses in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth century* (Routledge 1972)

Reid, Fiona *Broken Men shellshock, treatment and recovery in Britain 1914-1930* (Continuum 2010)

Scull, Andrew T *Museums of Madness: the social organisation of insanity in nineteenth century England* (Viking 1979)

Stevens, Mark *Broadmoor Revisited: Victorian crime and the lunatic asylum* (Pen & Sword 2013)

Stevens, Mark *Life in the Victorian Asylum: the world of nineteenth century mental health care* (Pen & Sword 2014)

Wise, Sarah *Inconvenient People: lunacy, liberty and the mad doctors in Victorian England* (Vintage 2013)

## Websites

Hospitals, Asylums and Sanatoriums (worldwide) from Cyndi's List

[www.cyndislist.com/medical/hospitals/](http://www.cyndislist.com/medical/hospitals/)

The National Archives' Research Guide Asylums, Psychiatric Hospitals and *Mental Health* [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/mental-health/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/help-with-your-research/research-guides/mental-health/)

History Co-operative Mental Illness

<http://historycooperative.org/a-beautiful-mind-the-history-of-the-treatment-of-mental-illness/>

Change Minds an archive for North Norfolk <http://changeminds.org.uk/>

The History of the Asylum

<http://thetimechamber.co.uk/beta/sites/asylums/asylum-history/the-history-of-the-asylum>

County Asylums [www.countyasylums.co.uk](http://www.countyasylums.co.uk)

Forgotten Women: stories of women whose lives were impacted by mental health

[www.fewforgottenwomen.com/mentalhealth](http://www.fewforgottenwomen.com/mentalhealth)

History of Mental disorders

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_mental\\_disorders](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_mental_disorders)

*Sketches in Bedlam* by a Constant Observer published in 1823

<https://ia601408.us.archive.org/16/items/39002086347292.med.yale.edu/39002086347292.med.yale.edu.pd>

Transcript of Journal of John Westover with case notes 1686-1700

[www.tutton.org/content/Westover\\_journal.pdf](http://www.tutton.org/content/Westover_journal.pdf)

Peter Higginbotham's Workhouses Site [www.workhouses.org.uk](http://www.workhouses.org.uk)

Hospital Records Database

[www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/notifications/hospital-records-hosprec-database/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/notifications/hospital-records-hosprec-database/)

Prestwich Asylum

<https://manchesterarchiveplus.wordpress.com/2015/02/02/the-prestwich-asylum/>

Devon County Lunatic Asylum, Exminster

[www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Asylum](http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/DEV/Asylum)

Queensland Mental Asylum Patients [www.judywebster.com.au/insanity.html](http://www.judywebster.com.au/insanity.html) and

<http://qld-genealogy.blogspot.co.uk/2012/06/mental-asylum-case-books.html>

West Riding Pauper Lunatic Asylum

[www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3000407/Portraits-asylum-Harrowing-19th-century-photos-patients-notorious-institution-kept-SHACKLES-visibly-distressed.html](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3000407/Portraits-asylum-Harrowing-19th-century-photos-patients-notorious-institution-kept-SHACKLES-visibly-distressed.html)

On the Periphery: A Survey of Nineteenth Century Asylums in the United States

[www.google.co.uk/&httpsredir=1&article=3128&context=all\\_theses](http://www.google.co.uk/&httpsredir=1&article=3128&context=all_theses)

Scottish Asylum Patients [www.oldscottish.com/asylum-patients.html](http://www.oldscottish.com/asylum-patients.html)

England's First State Imbecile Asylums <https://sochealth.co.uk/national-health-service/hospitals/englands-first-state-imbecile-asylums/>

Index of English and Welsh Asylums [http://studymore.org.uk/4\\_13\\_TA.HTM](http://studymore.org.uk/4_13_TA.HTM)

## **A Mental Health Timeline for the UK**

1324 The Statute de Prerogativa Regis – Crown to become guardian for those mentally incapable of administering their own estates

1407 Bethlehem Hospital predominantly for housing the ‘mad’

1542 Criminally insane concept introduced

1774 Act for Regulating Private Madhouses

1800 Act for the Safe Custody of Insane Persons Charged with Offences

1808 County Asylums Act

1823 Those who had taken their own lives could be buried in consecrated ground

1828 County Asylums Act

1832 Madhouse Act

1834 Poor Law Amendment Act

1843 Introduction of McNaughton Rules

1845 Lunatic Asylums Act

1845 Lunacy Act - defined various classifications of mental incapacity

1845 Alleged Lunatics Friends’ Society founded

1861 Survey of inmates of workhouses

1864 Broadmoor opened for criminally insane

1890 Lunacy Act

1913 Mental Deficiency Act - reinforced idea of criminally. Introduced revised definitions

1930 Mental Treatment Act encouraged patients to refer themselves voluntarily

1937 Divorce Reform Act one of grounds for divorce now being incurably insane

1938 Electro Convulsive Therapy began

1983 Mental Health Act brought in sectioning

*A casual stroll through the lunatic asylum shows that faith does not prove anything*

Friedrich Nietzsche