

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.



Joseph Askew (1825–1904), untitled



These two pictures by Joseph Askew, an inmate of the Crichton Royal Asylum, whose work was featured in the February 2005 issue, further demonstrate his diverse range of style and subject matter. The first picture is a still-life, while the second is of an exotic landscape, possibly inspired by his travels as a merchant. It is the last in our series from W. A. F. Browne's collection. Years after he had left the Crichton and when he had retired from the Scottish Lunacy Commission, Browne offered his reflections on the art of the insane in an article entitled 'Mad Artists', published in the *Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology*. Referring to his collection, he wrote: 'I have before me three gigantic volumes containing specimens of the pseudo art of lunatics in different forms and phases of derangement . . . These attempts were made in pencil, ink, water colours, chalk, sepia and oil during a period of twenty years'. He then proceeded to analyse the various pictures. For Browne, the 'art of the insane' was not essentially different from that of the sane. In this he differed from those commentators who have contended that there is something distinctive about the artistic productions of people with mental illness. It seems likely that Browne selected those patient works that fitted his thesis and rejected the more bizarre works, those that nowadays would be called 'outsider art'.

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