

Large-print book

Please do not remove from the gallery







Medicine and Communities

Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries

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Medicine and Communities

gallery introduction

Medicine has the power to shape the way we live, influencing us as individuals and as communities. But how much should it direct our lives: what we eat, where we live and how we treat each other? Opinion has varied widely over the years, exposing the conflicting interests of different groups. In Europe, medical knowledge has changed the way we deliver health care, but has also led to some of those who are sick being stigmatised and isolated.

Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries consists of five galleries, each looking at a specific area within medicine. There is a large-print book for each of the galleries.

Accessible features

Features for blind and partially sighted visitors

There is an audio soundscape playing on a loop in the entrance, between this gallery and Medicine and Treatments. This gallery features a small room with overhead speakers playing oral testimonies on a loop. There is also a film playing on a loop, with audio played via speakers and projected into the gallery.

An audio description app called Audio Eyes is available on iOS devices for the Medicine and Information Age galleries. The app offers audio-only descriptions for selected exhibits and enables you to roam freely through these galleries. You can either download it from the app store or borrow a free device from the Information desk located at the Exhibition Road entrance.

Features for Deaf and hard-of-hearing visitors

This gallery features films where the audio is provided through single-ear listening cups which include induction loops. Please look out for the induction loop 'ear' symbol for these exhibits and turn your hearing aid to the T setting. Some videos are silent and all videos with audio contain subtitles. British Sign Language is also available for selected audio where signposted.

Accessible events

A programme of accessible events will be delivered within the gallery, including audio-described tours. Please refer to the Science Museum website for the schedule and additional details, or ask at the museum Information desk. These accessible events are part of a wider Medicine events programme for adults and children.

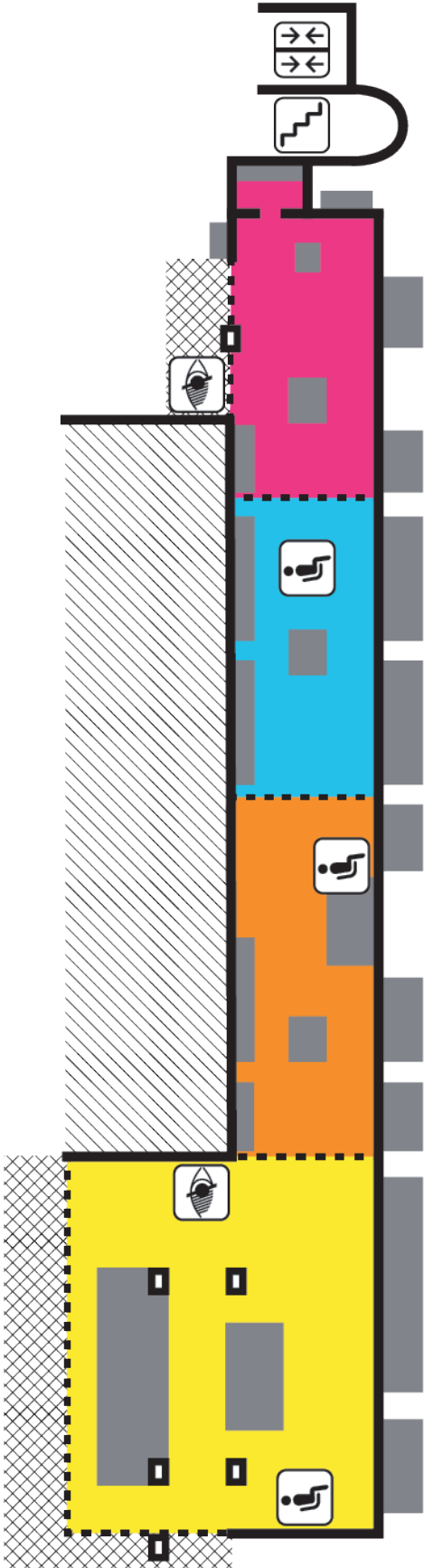
Wi-Fi is available throughout the gallery.













Gallery layout

The Medicine and Communities gallery is located on one floor. It is a long and thin rectangular-shaped space that can be accessed from two entrances at opposite ends: the Exploring Medicine gallery and the Faith, Hope and Fear gallery. The gallery is about 4 metres wide and 62 metres long. An atrium runs along one side of the gallery, providing a view down to level 0 and the Making the Modern World gallery. Lifts and stairs near both entrances provide access to the rest of the museum.

The gallery is divided into four zones and visitors can browse them as they wish. Each section is introduced by a star object and text (on tall red panels). Within each section are a series of display cases with important objects highlighted by cream-coloured text panels.

Gallery map



	Centres of Care		Wall		Seating
	Factors for Health		Show case		Stairs
	Fighting Infectious Disease		Atrium		Lift
	Medical Isolation		Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries (continued)		Large-print and Braille books

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Centres of Care

Section introduction

Access to medical health care is seen as a basic human need. We expect good care and have better, more productive and enjoyable lives as a result of it. In Britain we have become accustomed to the notion of medicine being there when we need it, for the entirety of our lives.

Over hundreds of years, hospitals have emerged as a way to centralise this care. These special places have evolved from refuges for the poor to sophisticated hubs of medical innovation. They have been supported by religious groups, charities and governments, and in their design and content reflect both our growing knowledge of medicine and our changing demands of it.

Object: The King's Fund miniature hospital 1932



This intricate model was not made to play with but was commissioned by the King's Fund charity to inspire a sense of pride and collective responsibility for hospitals. Complete with lighting and a range of facilities including wards, operating theatres, kitchens and an X-ray department, it was also built to raise public money to fund them.

It went on display in 1933, before touring the nation. Thousands of people came to see it.

1:16 scale model

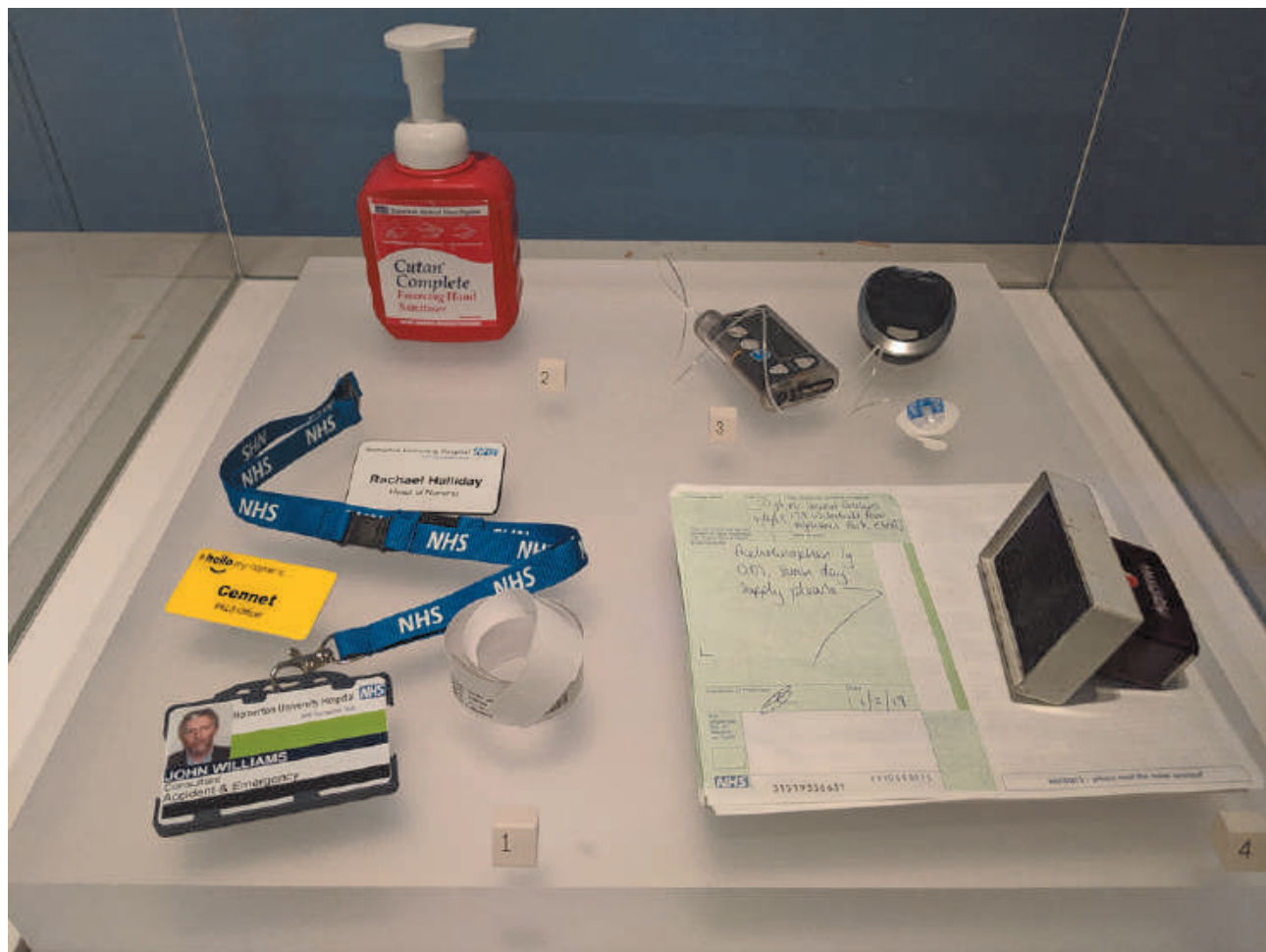
Britain

Lent by Wellcome Collection
to the Science Museum Group

Object no. A603147

Participation project: Our NHS

2010–2019



These everyday objects were chosen to reflect the National Health Service in 2019, when this gallery opened, more than seven decades after its launch. They suggest the range of services it continues to provide, the way it constantly evolves to meet the demands of our changing society and the emotional investment felt by the people involved. The objects were chosen by NHS staff and users, and the films were also developed in partnership with them.

Britain

Science Museum Group

1. **NHS staff lanyard, badges and patient wristbands, 2019.** Object nos. E2018.0976.1, E2018.0977.1, E2018.0983.1, E2018.0998.1
2. **Hand sanitiser, 2018–2019.** Object no. E2018.0978.1
3. **Blood glucose monitor and insulin pump, 2012–2016.** Object nos. E2018.0981.1, E2018.0982.1
4. **Stack of prescriptions and medical centre address stamp, 2010–2019**
Object nos. E2018.0979.1, E2018.0980.1

Objects: Ceremonial staffs

1801–1870



After Henry VIII's religious reformation of the 1530s, five key London hospitals were relaunched to reflect their new patronage. These so-called royal hospitals provided basic welfare for the poor.

Ceremonial staffs bear the initials and crests of the five hospitals. St Bartholomew's dealt with the sick, St Thomas' the elderly, Bethlem the mentally ill, Christ's cared for orphans, while Bridewell was part workhouse, part prison.

England. Lent by Wellcome Collection to the Science Museum Group

1. **Staff for St Bartholomew's hospital, 1801–1870**
Object no. A164566
2. **Staff for Bridewell and Bethlem hospitals, 1801–1870.**
Object no. A164567
3. **Staff for Bridewell and Bethlem hospitals, 1801–1870.**
Object no. A654394
4. **Staff for St Thomas' hospital, 1801–1870**
Object no. A654393
5. **Staff for Christ's hospital, 1801–1870**
Object no. A654521

Factors for Health

Section introduction

How healthy we are depends on many things, not just the personal lifestyle choices we make. The environments we live in, and how others in our local community behave, can also affect us.

The emergence of our modern urbanised world has created many challenges to our health. In response, those in authority have become increasingly involved in the decisions we make about our wellbeing.

Where we live, and how we live, can be modified, regulated and even outlawed in efforts to improve public health.

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Object: Bariatric training manikin 2017–2018



This manikin re-creates the shape and weight of someone who is exceptionally overweight. It is used to train health and emergency workers how to physically handle obese people, whether in care, in an ambulance or at home.

This is the extreme end of the weight spectrum, but at the time of its manufacture two-thirds of adult Britons were either overweight or obese.

Wales

Donated by Ruth Lee Ltd

Science Museum Group

Object no. 2018-5

Object: Arcade game
1930–1940



Fancy your luck? For a penny or two, playing this arcade game could win you a cigarette. With no restrictions other than access to some loose change, the game was open to all ages.

The amount of chewing gum found stuck to the underside of the game suggests some happy winners simply exchanged one habit for another.

Britain

Science Museum Group

Object no. 2006-287

Object: The 'bug van'
1925–1935



Vehicles known locally as 'bug vans' were used to collect clothing or property from homes infested with pests or where dangerous diseases had struck. The property was then either disinfected or destroyed.

This bug van was used in the south London borough of Lambeth, where it was also used to collect the belongings of families moving from slums to new housing.

England

Donated by Lambeth London Borough Council

Science Museum Group

Object no. 1990-514

Object: Model of slum housing 1900–1910



Showing a series of dwellings in Liverpool, crowded around communal toilets, this model was used to train Medical Officers of Health. From the 1840s the officers reported on poor local sanitation, disease outbreaks and other health matters.

Slums were run-down, overcrowded housing associated with poverty and disease, home to millions of Britons during the 1800s and beyond.

Britain

Lent by National Museums Liverpool

Object no. L2019-519

Object: Human curiosities

1804–1904



ANOTHER
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NOW EXHIBITING
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MR. MANSFIELD,
OF DEBDEN, ESSEX,
The most Wonderful Man ever known!
FOR
Age, Weight, Size, Pleasing features, & Stamina combined,
Weighing 469lbs.!
6' CIRCUMFERENCE, 97 INCHES !!!
Admission 6d.
Open from 11 to 2 Forenoon, and 3 to 10 in the Evening.
DAILEY, Printer, opposite the New Church, New Cut, Lambeth.

Global levels of obesity and excess weight have become major public health concerns. These conditions were less common in previous centuries and in extreme circumstances could even be matters of spectacle and curiosity.

These handbills from the 1800s and early 1900s reflect attitudes, then commonly held, towards men and women who could be publicly exhibited because of their body size, shape and weight.

Facsimiles

England

Lent by Wellcome Collection
to the Science Museum Group

Object nos. E2019.0332.1 – E2019.0332.11

Objects: Ration books

1939–1954



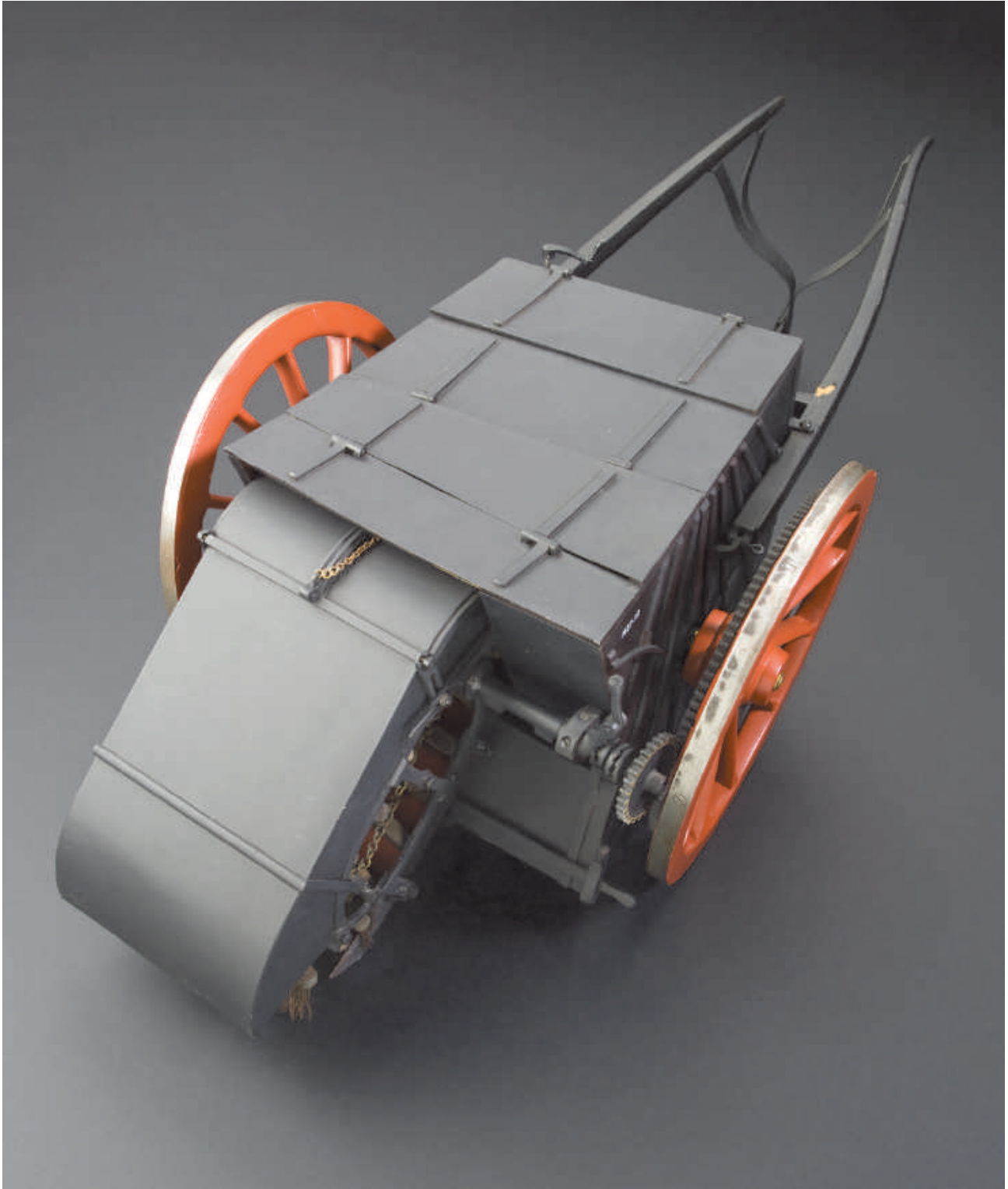
These small books were once an essential part of everyday life in Britain. They were initially issued by the Ministry of Food during the Second World War (1939–45). Using a system of coupons and points they entitled people to an allowance of products. New ration books were issued annually and restrictions continued for several years after peace was declared, until rationing in Britain finally ended in 1954.

Britain

Science Museum Group

Object nos. E2018.0893.1-3, E2018.0894.1-2,
E2018.0898.1-3, E2018.0899.1, E2018.0900.1,
E2018.0901.1, E2018.0902.1-3, E2018.0904.1

Object: Model of a street-sweeping machine
1850–1857



Engineer Joseph Whitworth introduced the street-sweeping machine to Manchester in 1842, at a time when urbanisation brought with it filth and rubbish, choking city streets with refuse.

Few of these expensive and impractical machines were made, but they indicated a need to tackle waste. In 1866 the Sanitary Act made local authorities responsible for regular street cleaning.

England

Science Museum Group

Object no. 1857-112

Object: Model of a refuse destructor 1890–1901



From the 1870s local authorities had a legal responsibility to collect and then dispose of rubbish. What they could not bury they burned with machines like this one. The heat they generated was often used to create steam or electrical power for the local community.

This design is by the Horsfall Destructor Company and was typical of many similar machines installed across Britain.

England
Science Museum Group
Object no. 1901-38

Fighting Infectious Disease

Section introduction

We can all catch infectious diseases, brought on by bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms. Some, such as the common cold, rarely cause any serious problems. But others kill millions of us every year.

Controlling the spread of infection has been a major focus for governments and organisations across the world. Preventing it is complicated, but great improvements have been made through vaccination, education, increased standards of living and global cooperation.

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Object: Iron lung

1953



A cabinet respirator, better known as an iron lung, kept a person breathing when their lungs were paralysed either temporarily or permanently by the disease polio.

It was sealed around the body so a pump could regulate air pressure inside, forcing the person's chest to rise and fall. There is no cure for polio. At best, people had to hope its impact would pass while they waited, immobilised.

England
Science Museum Group
Object no. 1990-395

Object: X-ray machine for TB screening 1961



People around Britain were X-rayed for signs of TB using machines such as this one. At its peak it may have imaged more than 100 people a day. Those found to be infected were paid by the state to take time off work and seek treatment, protecting their family, friends and workmates from infection. These mass screening programmes continued until the mid-1960s.

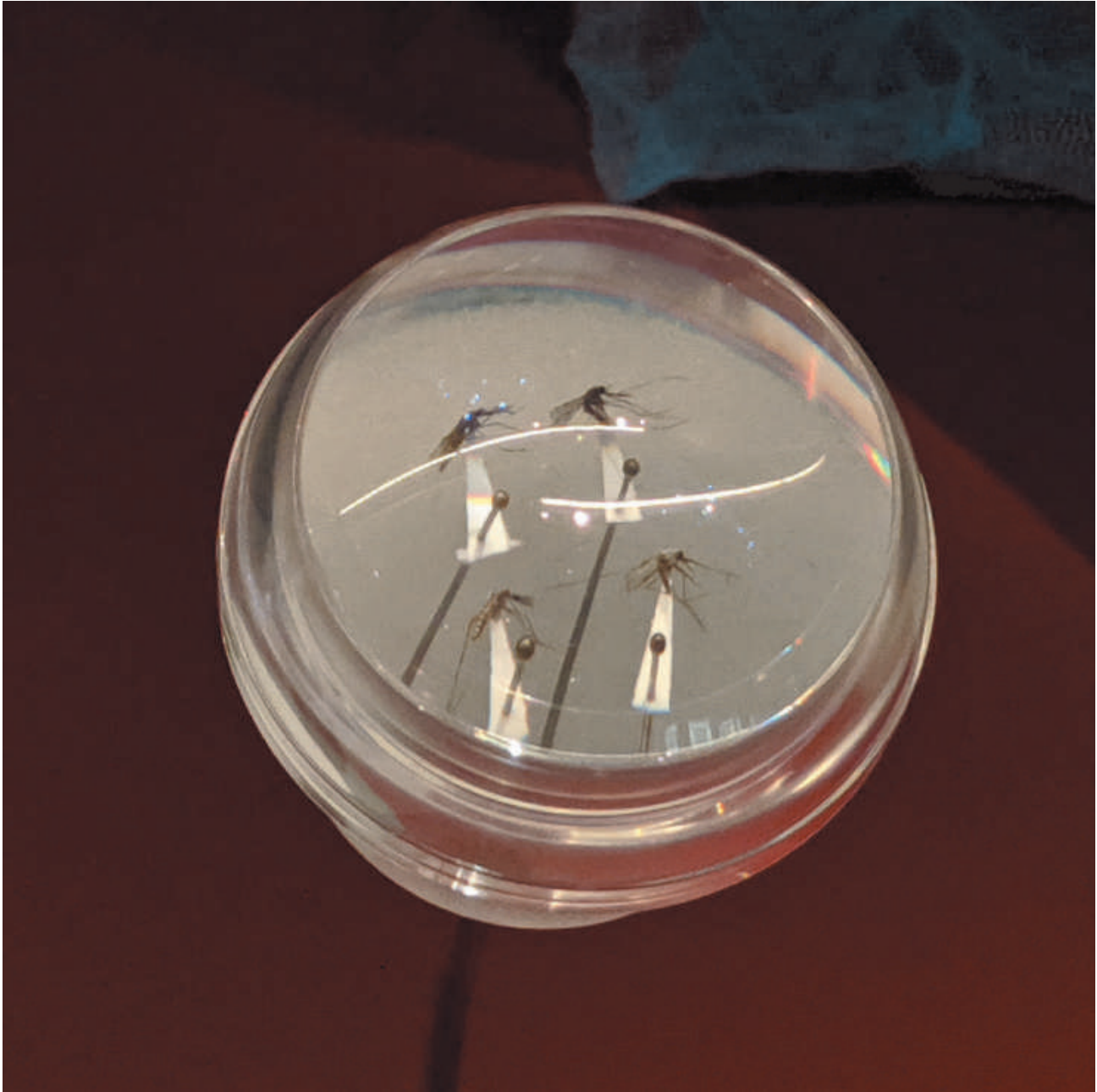
The Netherlands

Donated by King George V Hospital

Science Museum Group

Object no. 1987-1095

Object: Mosquito specimens
2018



Breeding and studying mosquitoes in the laboratory are key to fighting malaria. Specially bred mosquitoes allow researchers to examine the traits that regulate how and when malaria is transmitted. By understanding how the disease works, they can devise ways to stop it. The genetically modified laboratory mosquitoes on the left have white eyes, unlike wild mosquitoes, to help researchers identify them.

Britain

Donated by The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
Science Museum Group
Object no. E2018.0928.1

Object: Antimosquito bed net 2005



Mosquitoes usually feed on people during the night, so this net is designed to hang over a bed. Fine-mesh nets have long been used as a barrier against mosquitoes, but this example has also been coated with an insecticide.

The combination of two established technologies has become a simple and widely used way to protect against malaria.

Japan

Science Museum Group

Object no. 2006-130

Object: Polio rehabilitation chair
1901–1905



Working in a similar way to a modern exercise bike, this chair was used by a woman who contracted polio as a child. It is one of a range of machines developed by Dr Gustav Zander, an influential Swedish orthopaedic doctor who advocated the benefits of exercise.

People with polio could require years of rehabilitation, and many were left with lifelong disabilities.

Germany

Donated by Patricia Nugee

Science Museum Group

Object no. 1979-136

Object: Edward Jenner's lancet
1795–1800



This was one of Edward Jenner's lancets. It was possibly used to administer some of the world's first ever vaccinations, against smallpox, an infectious disease that had killed millions throughout history. He performed them by dipping the lancet in vaccine and then cutting it into the skin. Lancets were one of a doctor's most important tools, used in surgery and to release blood through blood-letting, a common treatment until the late 1800s.

Probably Britain

Lent by Wellcome Collection
to the Science Museum Group

Object no. A600034

Object: Rabies warning sign

About 1985



This sign was made in preparation for a rabies outbreak in Britain. Fortunately, it was never needed, as strict animal quarantine kept the disease out. The last human death from rabies originating in Britain was in 1902.

Since 2000, pet owners from selected countries have been allowed to bring their animals here without quarantine, but under certain rules.

Britain

Donated by Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food
Science Museum Group

Object no. 1997-446

Medical Isolation

Section introduction

From the imposing brick walls of psychiatric institutions in the 1800s to the emergency field hospitals associated with modern epidemics, there are countless ways medical interventions have isolated people.

Sometimes doctors create controlled environments in the belief they can offer better treatment in them. At other times those in authority choose to confine people to contain a perceived health threat. Public discrimination and stigma, or even personal choice, can also lead individuals to various forms of isolation.

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Object: Isolation trolley
1976 (with later additions)



This isolation trolley was developed to help transport people with dangerous and highly infectious diseases, or those who were suspected of having them.

Medical staff have several ways to gain protected physical access to the patient. While inside, the patient breathes air that is both filtered before it enters the chamber and again before it is released.

Britain

Donated by PCS Isolators Ltd

Science Museum Group

Object no. 2018-474

Object: Health worker's protective clothes 2013–2014



A health worker in a temporary hospital in Sierra Leone wore these protective clothes during a devastating epidemic of Ebola, which began in 2014.

This highly contagious virus can kill up to 70% of those who are infected. The temporary hospitals had strict quarantine rules, and health workers caring for patients had to take extreme precautions not to spread the virus beyond the infected zone.

Mostly Europe

Donated by International Medical Corps

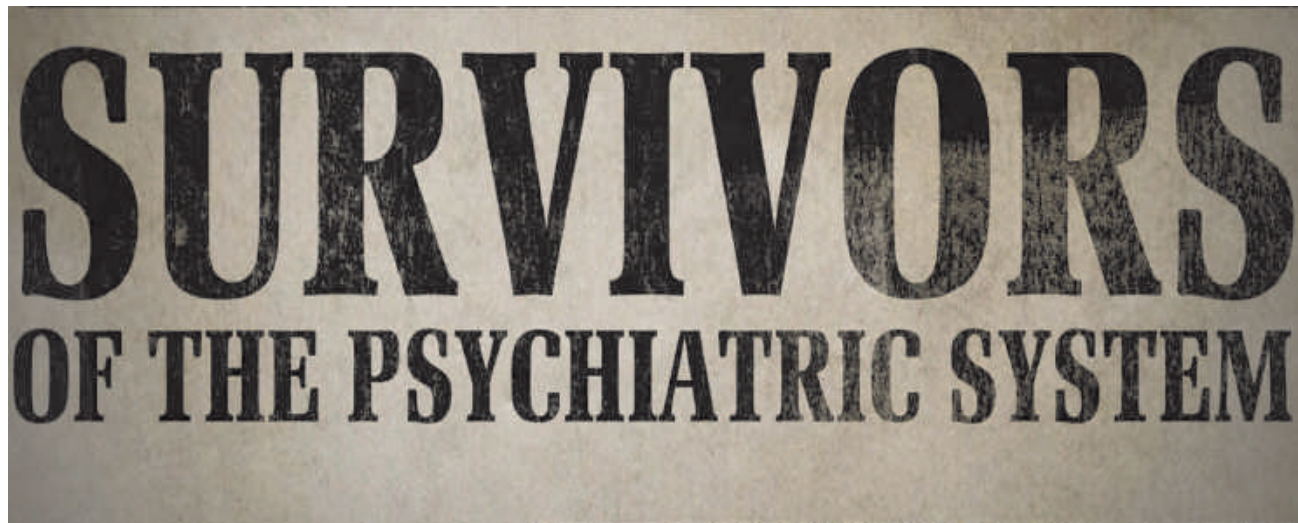
Science Museum Group

Object nos. 2018-534 – 2018-544

Participation project:

Let's look at mental health in a different way

2017–2019



Six individuals with extensive knowledge and experience of the mental health system came together to create the films, text and audio on this touch screen.

The group formed specially for this project with the support of Core Arts, a mental health charity.

“As a group of survivors of psychiatry, we want to encourage people to question society’s perceptions of mental health. And to consider the realities and brutality of the psychiatric system. Drawing upon our collective knowledge and experience, spanning from the 1960s to the present day, we have worked together to create these films, audio and the accompanying information to help raise awareness.”

Objects: Home comforts?

1872–1985



Housing large numbers of long-term patients, psychiatric hospitals were less clinical in character than general hospitals. Among the institutional fixtures and fittings were also more domestic items.

The hospital view was painted by a resident and hung on a corridor wall. To provide some colour and song, birdcages were familiar features on many wards. This cage once held three parakeets.

England

Science Museum Group

**1. Painting of St Audry's hospital,
Suffolk, 1930–1985**

Donated by East Suffolk Health Authority

Object no. 1990-183/18

**2. Birdcage from Brighton County
Borough Asylum, 1872**

Donated by The Princess Royal Hospital

Object no. 1996-271/31

Object: Nurse's belt and keys

1940–1965



Before the 1960s almost every door in a psychiatric hospital was locked, so staff needed to carry numerous keys. This set was used in the psychiatric wards at Farnborough Hospital in Kent.

The keys are hung on a soldered metal bracket, making it difficult to snatch them off the belt.

England

Science Museum Group

Object no. 1988-571

Installation: Padded cell



To your right is a padded cell from the psychiatric wing of a hospital. Such spaces were used to isolate patients considered a danger to themselves or to others, people who may have been angry, violent or suicidal, or those experiencing epileptic or psychotic attacks.

But over time these cells have assumed a cultural significance beyond their original use. Were these rooms places of punishment or of safety? Places to be feared or an opportunity for peace and solitude? Such ambiguities are touched on in a space where you will hear voices of former patients – including one who spent time in the cell displayed here – and readings from the regulations and logbooks of psychiatric hospitals.

These recordings cover subjects that some people may find upsetting. Duration 10 minutes.

Padded cell from Farnborough Hospital
1936–1940
England
Science Museum Group
Object no. 1988-572

Object: Skeleton showing signs of leprosy
About 1350



This is the skeleton of a woman who lived with leprosy for several decades. The effects of the disease can clearly be seen in marks and damage to her skull, shoulder blades and the bones in her feet.

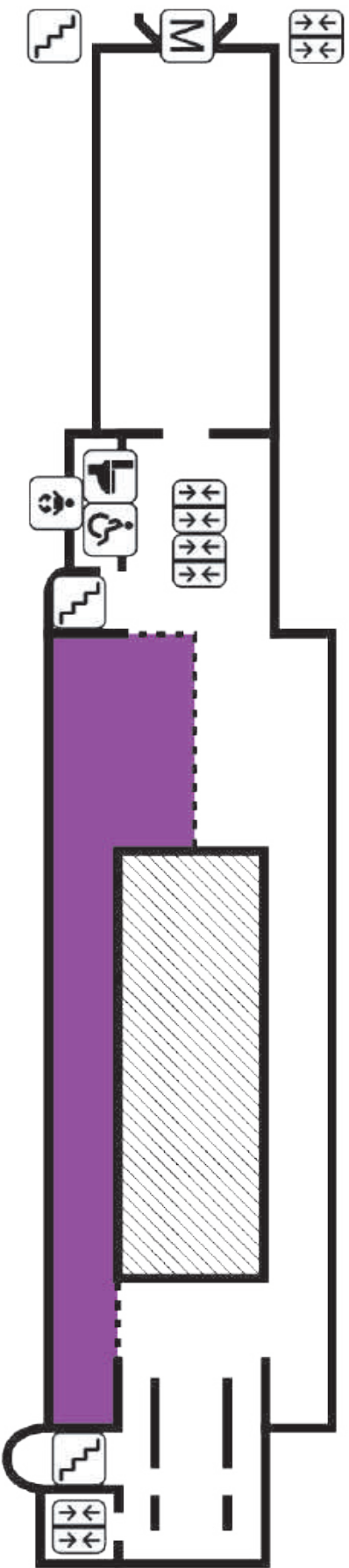
She lived in Denmark more than 600 years ago and had been buried in a cemetery reserved for those with the disease.

Denmark

Lent by Wellcome Collection
to the Science Museum Group

Object no. A635011

Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries overview map



Medicine and
Communities

— Wall

Atrium

M Main museum

Stairs

Lift

Toilets

Accessible toilets

Baby changing