the settlement reached. Where facilities are not provided or are not sufficiently funded, it is not always possible to provide the optimum care. The fate of the landless idiot or lunatic in medieval England may have been little different from that of mentally ill people who roam the streets today, but most madmen probably had more support in the community than do their modern counterparts.

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Views from the gallery

Fiona Haslam

Gout

Thomas Sydenham wrote in 1705:

The gout most commonly seizes such Old men, as have liv'd the most part of their Lives tenderly and delicately, allowing themselves freely Banquets, Wine, and other Spirituous Liquors, and at length by reason of the Sloth that always attends Old-Age, have quite omitted such Exercise as young Men are wont to Use. Moreover they who are Subject to this Disease have large Skulls, and most commonly are of gross Habit of Body, moist and lax, and of strong and lusty Constitution, the best and richest Foundation for Life.

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Fig 1—The Marriage Contract. Scene 1 of William Hogarth's "Marriage à la Mode"

William Hogarth may never have read any of Sydenham's works, but he did portray a typical gout sufferer—in line with the physician's prescription—in the first scene of his series *Marriage à la Mode* (1745). Here is a middle aged, well endowed figure, his Constitution stretching back to William the Conqueror, complete with the stereotypical bandaged foot, footstool, and crutches. This man's character, presented with a few brush strokes, is flawed: the gout represents physical, moral, and social defects.

In Hogarth's moral tale, the Earl of Squanderfield can be seen negotiating a marriage contract between his son and a merchant's daughter, offering a branch on the family tree in exchange for money with which to support his extravagant lifestyle—a style illustrated by the architecturally flawed building being constructed outside the window. The Earl's character, his way of life, and decision making on behalf of the disinterested young couple are all bound together, placed on a footstool, and labelled "gout." With the symbolic meaning of "lust" attached to the portrayal of gout, the flaw in Hogarth's Earl is transformed artistically into a hereditary weakness; it is transferred to the son via a black patch on the latter's neck and transmitted through the rest of Hogarth's series, with disastrous results.

Such artistic aspects of gout were not lost on political satirists. A later print shows William Pitt as a typical gout sufferer, his affliction caused by his attempts to transfer tobacco tax from customs to excise. Bandages labelled "Excise" are wrapped round his leg and the "disease" is causing his infirmity and threatening his ministry.

Artistically, gout represented folly in many guises and was seen as a just reward for sins or misdemeanors of all kinds. Of course, a sitter might actually have been suffering from gout: in the 17th and 18th centuries the term gout covered many kinds of arthritis.

Fig 2—"The Mountebank at a Fair," by Thomas Rowlandson

Quacks

People on the fringes of society tend to attract and hold the attention of other members of that society. During the 18th century, itinerant quacks belonged to this fringe element. Notoriety and eccentricity added to their "commercial" value—both for themselves and for the many artists and playwrights who used the interest engendered by such characters by including them, or references to their activities, in their own works. In addition to the picturesque qualities that quacks provided, they could be used by graphic artists to illustrate such characteristics as pretentiousness, ignorance, and loquacity (with which they were commonly associated) and to display the extent of human folly, stupidity, and gullibility to which a large proportion of the population was subject. A particular practitioner might also provide a topical element to

a piece of work. The images of quacks could reflect a practice and convey an idea: their presence was well known and recognised and their practices were both reviled and praised.

Thomas Rowlandson, touring round the countryside, saw how itinerant quacks or mountebanks operated. He drew examples of practitioners in market places in different locations—each plying his trade with the aid of a "Merry Andrew," monkey, musicians, or "Black Pudding." No 17th or 18th century mountebank was complete without his zany or "Merry Andrew"—a term originally applied to Dr Andrew Boorde, physician to King Henry VIII, who was noted for his ready wit and humour and was the subject of many broadside ballads. A "Black Pudding" was a little black accomplice. These accessory characters helped to attract the crowd and to dispense nostrums. A drummer boy might even drown the noise of any unfortunate customer who succumbed to the temptation of having a tooth extracted at the invitation of a visiting "dental practitioner."

In Rowlandson's scene the quack is billed as the seventh son of a seventh son. Such individuals were popularly believed to have the ability to heal.

Political caricaturists appropriated the itinerant quack's domain for their own comments. They used him to personify politicians, for example, as arrogant, boastful pretenders who did little good for the country. Samuel Butler wrote in *Hudibras*:

The Quacks of government (who sate
At th'unregarded helm of state) . . .
And therefore met in consultation
To cant and quack upon the nation
Not for the sickly patient's sake,
Nor what to give, but what to take;
To feel the purses of their fees,
More wise than fumbling arteries;
Prolong the snuff of life in pain,
And from the grave recover—gain.

As the century advanced quacks became more sophisticated in their modes of operation. But that is another story.

Gone to the devil: the murals of Ile Royale hospital

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A J Davidson, systems
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Space

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Off the coast of French Guiana lie three small islands, one of which became famous a century ago when Alfred Dreyfus was incarcerated there: Devil's Island has become synonymous with penal servitude. The name encompassed the whole penal colony of Le

Bagne, and to be "sent to the devil" or "go to the devil" has become an everyday phrase.

On the largest island, Ile Royale, are the official residences and the prison hospital, now deserted, though access through the window arch is not difficult.

Left—Convict receiving a preliminary examination.
Right—Hospital orderly or assistant performing routine preparations; perhaps a self portrait of the artist at work. Official records confirm that trusted and non-violent convicts held minor positions within the colony