

# Face to Face – Stories from the Asylum

From the Curator of Museum Services at the University of Dundee :



**Tower Foyer Gallery, University of Dundee**  
**Now on and running until 9th June**  
**Monday to Friday 9.30am to 7pm and Saturday 1pm to 5pm**

Our understanding of the Victorian lunatic asylum, and our perception of the history of psychiatry, is often fed by myth and fiction. The nineteenth century did indeed see a massive rise in the building of asylums, as institutional care became the dominant means of caring for the insane. But what do we know of the lives of those who entered them as patients? How did they experience mental illness?

Face to Face: Stories from the Asylum is an exhibition exploring the lives of a small group of patients admitted to Dundee Royal Lunatic Asylum between 1886 and 1902. Using information and photographs from their case notes, the exhibition examines the circumstances which led to their committal to the asylum, the dilemmas faced by their families, and the nature of their mental illness.

Looking at examples from the past is a valuable way to consider the social and cultural contexts that create understandings of mental disorders. Through the poignant stories of past sufferers, the exhibition aims to engage with contemporary concerns about the experience of mental disorders, past and present, the effect on family and community, and the wider social attitudes associated with mental illness.

This exhibition is part of the 'Promoting Mental Health through the Lessons of History' project, based at the University of St Andrews, and is a collaboration with University of Dundee Archive Services.

The exhibition has been curated by PhD student Morag Allan Campbell.