

Psychiatry in pictures

CHOSEN 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.



John Gilmour (1882–1931), *Common Sense*.

John Gilmour was a Glasgow merchant who spent the early part of the 20th century in asylums in Trinidad, America and Scotland. During his period of incarceration, Gilmour completed a series of pictures describing what he saw as his brutal treatment in the 'lunatic manufacturing company', as he called the asylum system. Gilmour portrayed himself as the hero, standing up to the sinister designs of the asylum staff. Ten such pictures, completed during his stay (1905–1913) at the Crichton Royal Institution in Dumfries, have survived and are housed in the hospital museum. Gilmour was considered by the asylum staff to suffer from delusions of persecution. In this picture, Gilmour portrays himself sitting in a fishing boat, entitled *Common Sense*. He is being pursued by a winged figure who bears the names of the asylums in which Gilmour was treated. He is also pursued by sea monsters, and we see that fish, bearing the legends 'reason' and 'sense', are jumping out of the boat. Gilmour is illustrating a common perception that asylum treatment paradoxically serves to make patients lose their reason: if they were not mad before they entered the asylum, they certainly would be after admission. Another picture by Gilmour will feature in next month's issue. Thanks to Morag Williams, Archivist, Dumfries and Galloway Health Board, Crichton Royal Hospital, Easterbrook Hall, Dumfries.