

# Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies; Disability & the Victorians: Confronting Legacies; 30<sup>th</sup> July-1<sup>st</sup> August 2012; Leeds Trinity University College

## *Second Call for Papers*

The nineteenth century was the period during which disability was conceptualised, categorised, and defined. The industrial revolution, advances in medicine, the emergence of philanthropy and the growth of asylums all played their part in creating what today's society describes as the medical model of disability.

Disability can be traced through many forms: in material culture and literary genres; scientific, medical and official inquiries; art; architecture; the history of disabled charities; disabled people's experiences; the legacy inherited by disabled people today of the taxonomies and categories of disability – the 'handicapped'; the 'deaf and dumb'; the 'feeble minded'; the blind; the 'imbecile' the 'idiot' and the 'cretin' -- the legacy of the relationship between the body, the visual, the scientific and the literary text; the intersection of disability, theories of evolution, the emergence of the disciplines of statistics, social sciences and anthropology, eugenics and degeneration.

This conference seeks to address conceptualisations of disability in the Victorian period and their legacy(ies); the ways in which we can draw disabled voices and testimonies together to construct 'the long view', the intersection of disability studies and Victorian studies, and the conceptual, disciplinary, and pedagogical issues that arise as a consequence of this research. Proposals for papers, panels, posters and other forms of presentation (e.g. creative writing and performance) are invited that open up new lines of research and inquiry relating to any aspect of Disability in the Victorian period.

Possible themes might include:

- **Resistance/conformity:** subversion, transgression, agency and constraint.
- **Victorian institutions:** charities, asylums, schools and clubs.
- **The visibility and invisibility of disability:** beggars, street sellers, hawkers, freak shows and circuses
- **Normalising practices:** definitions, constructions, categories and taxonomies.
- **Victorian technologies:** assistive and medical.
- **The emergence of specialisms:** from audiology to psychiatry.
- **Disability as a moral force for improvement:** theology and spiritual enlightenment/development, literature and the school of pain.
- **The formation of Victorian identities:** nation, empire, 'race'.
- **Disability and the fear of loss:** national efficiency, eugenics and 'degeneration'.
- **Medical and cultural histories:** medical illustration and advertising, the relationship between the literary, the medical and the scientific text.
- **Acts:** Victorian social policy and legal frameworks.
- **Work:** employment, employability, the regulated employment and non-employment of disabled people
- **The spaces of disability:** art, architecture, environment.
- **Pedagogy:** teaching about disability and the disabled in the Victorian period.
- **Representing disability to non-specialist audiences:** heritage interpretations, public histories, dictionaries.

Those with an involvement in disability, either through direct experience, or work, teaching etc., and papers that adopt an interdisciplinary or comparative frame, shifting across the normal boundaries of history, literary studies, the history of medicine, the history and philosophy of science, art history, etc. are especially sought, but studies with a narrower focus seeking to challenge Victorian legacies in this field are also welcome.

Panels will consist of 20-minute presentations grounded in work submitted electronically in advance of the event. These pieces will be made available in advance, on a website dedicated to the event. Work may subsequently be considered for publication.

Please send a short biographical note together with your proposal. Prospective panel organisers should also send the panelists' names, paper titles, and a short biographical note for each panelist and their contact details.

Proposals, or enquiries relating to these, should be sent to Prof Karen Sayer [k.sayer@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:k.sayer@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

The **deadline** for the submission of proposals for individual 20-minute papers or presentations (200-250 words), and proposals for panel sessions (no longer than 500 words), is **31<sup>st</sup> August, 2011**.

**Confirmed Speakers include:**

Joanne Woiak, Ph.D., Disability Studies Program, University of Washington;  
Professor Martha Stoddard Holmes, Ph.D., Professor and Chair of Literature and Writing Studies, Cal State University San Marcos, USA, 'Fictions of Affliction: Physical Disability in Victorian Culture'; Professor Vanessa Toulmin, Director of National Fairground Archive, National Fairground Archive (Western Bank Library) University of Sheffield.

Mat Fraser, Actor, writer, MC, and Disability Artist, 'Freak to Clique' (invited to attend and perform)

Participants also already include independent researchers in the field, charities including **coHearentVision**, and those working with heritage providers/within public history, as well as those holding academic posts.

**General enquiries to:**

Joy Hamblin, Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, Leeds Trinity University College, Brownberrie Lane, Leeds, LS18 5HD [j.hamblin@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:j.hamblin@leedstrinity.ac.uk); tel. 0113 2837305