



**For immediate release**

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## **MENTAL HEALTH REGISTERS UNEARTHED AT EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE ARCHIVES**

The stark reality of how the mentally ill were treated in Yorkshire over 130 years ago is revealed for the first time in a series of nineteenth century mental health registers.

As part of the [Archive Awareness Campaign](#), East Riding of Yorkshire Archives has catalogued the registers - the Men's and Women's Case Books from the Broadgate Hospital archive. Comprising case records of individuals admitted to Broadgate between 1871 and 1906, the registers paint a harrowing picture of life for the mentally ill over a century ago.

Patient details include name, age, marital status as well as cause of insanity such as 'suicidal' and 'depression'. Also listed, are notes on countenance, pulse rates, 'bowels' and dated comments on the condition and progress of the patient.

**Ian Mason, Archives & Local Studies Manager** said:

"Sadly, despite our modern preconceptions of mental hospitals, some of the patients admitted to Broadgate in its early days would not be diagnosed insane today. Cases such as epilepsy and depression, which we can treat relatively easily today, were not as well understood and were considered a form of 'idiocy' or 'stupidity'.

For example, William George Marsden, 56, a gardener from Pocklington, was admitted to Broadgate on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1905 suffering from what we would now call clinical depression. The case notes describe him as 'dull', stupid, and 'lain in bed'. It also states that 'he is suffering from Melancholia'. He is depressed and morbidly emotional,

becomes anxious at trifling circumstances and at times becomes greatly agitated and threatens suicide”.

Broadgate Hospital, which was located outside Walkington and is currently a housing development, opened in 1871 and remained so for 118 years until its closure in 1989.

Family historians can search by name for ancestors who may have been admitted to Broadgate during that period by using the ‘Archive Search’ on the East Riding Council website [www.eastriding.gov.uk](http://www.eastriding.gov.uk).

**Collections Officer, Sam Bartle** said:

“The majority of family history researchers using our facility tend to focus on the census and microfilmed parish registers, but many of them are perhaps unaware that they also have the region’s archives at their fingertips”.

**Angela Owusu, Archive Awareness Campaign officer** said:

“It is well worth looking at the archive catalogues at East Riding of Yorkshire Archives to see what collections they have. Although a number of these registers are disturbing, they are a brilliant example of how archives can be used to help add ‘meat’ to the bones of your family history.”

For further details, spokespeople or images on the Archive Awareness Campaign, please contact **Angela Owusu** on **0208 392 5237** or email

[Angela.Owusu@nationalarchives.gov.uk](mailto:Angela.Owusu@nationalarchives.gov.uk)



## Notes to Editors

For more information, contact Sam Bartle on 01482 392 794 or Ian Mason on 01482 392 785

- To read the registers, visit the research/reading room at the Treasure House (near the library) on Champney Road, Beverley.
- Archive Awareness is spearheaded by the National Council on Archives ([www.nca.org.uk](http://www.nca.org.uk)) and funded by The National Archives ([www.nationalarchives.gov.uk](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk)) and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council ([www.mla.gov.uk](http://www.mla.gov.uk)).
- Archive Awareness Campaign [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com) is an ongoing celebration of all kinds of fascinating archive treasures. It celebrates and promotes local and national archives. Throughout the year archives across the country open their doors to showcase history, hold open days and present workshops to help the public discover a piece of their own history.
- To find an Archive Awareness Campaign event near you or to discover more about the UK's archives visit [www.archiveawareness.com](http://www.archiveawareness.com)