A History of Disability

From a Disability Arts perspective
Kind permission to use the front cover photograph received
from the Manchester Disabled People’s Archive
Introduction

To the uninitiated, disability art conjures an image of a disabled person struggling to paint by clutching a paint brush between their teeth or toes, or as our first image shows, somewhat with tongue in cheek, a man without arms with a giant paintbrush strapped to his head painting on a canvas - a la disabled avant-garde performance artist Aaron Williamson.

This unlikely satire on a far too prevalent misconception is far from the truth. Throughout the course of history disabled people and our allies have used this medium in our struggle for equal rights; Disability Arts playing an important and vital role in this fight.

As well as more recent examples of disability arts in this history, we’ve also included other interesting facts that relate to disabled people more generally and how we’ve been perceived over the centuries, both good and bad.
Disabled people have used art as a form of protest against these restrictions and restraints and also as a way of educating people. Disability Art has become a powerful means of expression for disability communities throughout the world and we at Disability Arts Online are proud to be associated with this continuing expression of protest and creativity.

Colin Hambrook - Editor
Disability Arts Online (DAO)

NB: It has proved difficult to obtain permissions to use some of the images relating to specific times in history. We’ve therefore asked Crippen – DAO resident disabled cartoonist to fill in these blanks for us. As you’ll see, his irrepressible sense of humour figures in most of his images.
The Earliest Example?

If we view disability art as an expression of the experience of life as a disabled person and also as an interpretation of other disabled people’s experiences, then perhaps the first recorded evidence of disability art can be seen painted onto the walls of a cave in the Drakensberg Park in South Africa.

Thought to be over **6,000 years old**, the artwork is attributed to our ancient ancestors the San people.

It shows a hunter using a bow and arrow with the lower part of his right leg missing. He is included with other hunters, including a child, and appears to be participating as an equal.

Of course, the image could have had a different meaning or carried some sort of symbolism. Or the artist could have just run out of pigment and wasn’t able to finish the figure. We’ll never really know.

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Our next example of art depicting a disabled person can be found in India over 5000 years ago around **3500 BC**.

Here we have an ancient sacred poem called the Rig-Veda which describes the life of the disabled warrior Queen Vishpala.

She had lost a leg during a fierce battle and was fitted with an iron prothesis which enabled her to return to the battlefield and “achieve much glory”.

Note: Thanks are due to American artist Jason Porath who kindly gave us permission to use his image from his Rejected Princesses series.
Outline

In Babylon, around 2000 BC children who were born with congenital impairments had their shape outlined onto parchment. These were then used to predict the future.

These pieces of ‘art’ would later be sold by the priests of this ancient Mesopotamian religion in order to maintain their privileged lifestyle.

Mobility

The earliest art we see portraying equipment designed specifically for disabled people is from 600 BC.

This image is a copy of a ceramic tile that was discovered in China during a recent archaeological dig.
Ancient Egypt

From **495 BC** an image from Ancient Egypt was discovered during an archaeological dig and depicts a carving of an Egyptian man with a withered leg using a walking stick.

Archaeologists have surmised that this may be the first evidence we have found of the Poliomyelitis virus. Also, as the figure is a grown male, it may also indicate that not all disabled people in Egypt were disposed of, especially at birth as was often the case in many other societies at this time.

Another carving unearthed at an archaeological dig depicted a person of restricted growth in the role of Keeper of the Royal wardrobe. This was an important role to be entrusted to a disabled person who could have had similar duties to that of a Chamberlin.

Other carvings found also depicted disabled people, mainly those who were blind, as harpists and singers in the Egyptian Royal court. Although some historians think that those providing this background music for the royal family were deliberately blinded to ensure privacy.
... a carving of an Egyptian man with a withered leg ...
Eugenics

Something that has played a role in determining how disabled people have been viewed over the centuries has been the concept of eugenics, which was first introduced in Plato’s Socratic dialogue ‘Republic’ in ancient Greece in **375 BC**.

Meaning ‘good creation’ it was based upon the study of how to arrange reproduction within a human population to increase the occurrence of heritable characteristics regarded as desirable. By definition this meant the culling of those characteristics deemed undesirable, such as impairment or poor health.

This thinking has carried through to more recent times with forced sterilisation and the banning of marriage for disabled people in some cultures.

It was also used as the basis for the extermination of thousands of disabled people by the Nazi Party during the second world war.
... and the banning of marriage for disabled people in some cultures.
Early Misconceptions

During the same era around 380 BC Aristotle wrote that: ‘those born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason’. This is yet another misconception that has been carried through into modern times, explaining why Deaf people have often been categorised as being learning disabled with the consequent limitations that our societies have imposed upon them.

In Sparta in 200 BC the state ruled on whether weak children should be reared or left to die because children belonged to the state rather than to their parents.

A child that was deemed healthy was allowed to survive but an ‘ill-formed’ child had to be disposed of by its father.

Lycurgus, the quasi-legendary Spartan lawgiver, and orator stated:

“children are state property and that those born ‘puny and ill shaped’ should be disposed of.”
“... those born ‘puny and ill shaped’ should be disposed of.”

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Confucius, he say ...

During 150 BC the Chinese historian Ch’u Yuann claimed that many Chinese classicists were disabled, whether socially, physically or emotionally.

This included Confucius, the ancient Chinese philosopher, whom he noted was often suffering mental distress (depression) whilst writing his thoughts.

I Claudius

In 41 AD The Roman Emperor Claudius wrote about how his physical impairment (a stammer) was often mistaken for mental impairment, and how his family tried to keep him out of the public eye.

His writings provide an insight into how disability was viewed by the ancient Romans and how he was fortunate not to have been thrown into the river Tiber at birth, as was the usual case with children born with any physical impairment.
Religious References

Numerous references in the Old Testament associate disability with sin. God tells Moses: ‘None of your descendants...shall draw near a blind or lame man, or he that hath a mutilated face or a limb too long, or man that has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback or dwarf or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be with scurvy, scabbed.’ (Leviticus 21:16-20).

However, the Bible also contains what might be the world’s earliest example of antidiscrimination legislation: ‘Thou shalt not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind, nor maketh the blind to wander out of the path.’ (Leviticus 19:14).

There is also an emphasis in the New Testament on cure and healing, as disabled people become the focus of Christ’s miracles.

The Jewish Talmud suggests that impairment is a holy state and a means of getting to heaven; those that help disabled people are similarly blessed. However, in the Jewish Torah, people are forbidden from serving God if they are disabled or tameh (polluted).
But not every disabled person from ancient history had a difficult time as our next image shows. In **865 AD** the infamous disabled Danish Prince Ivarr the Boneless, paralysed from the waist down was, according to chronicles of the time, carried around on a Viking round shield and driven in a custom-made chariot. In the televised adaptation ‘Vikings’ researchers also discovered that he had ‘walked’ with the aid of leg braces and crutches.

Many Norse warriors who went ‘a Viking’ often lost limbs during the fierce fighting that took place when they raided. Many of these chose to have a quick ‘warrior’s death’ and go to Valhalla rather than be disabled and lose their honoured place in the shield wall.
Divine Inspiration

In the **1100’s** Arabs in Baghdad establish asylums for people with mental distress, viewing mental illness as divinely inspired.

Family Care

In the **1200’s** The Belgian village of Gheel supports people with mental illness in family care settings and provides vocational opportunities.

Asylums and Institutions

Also, during the **1200’s** Asylums and Institutions for people with mental illness are founded in Damascus and Aleppo, and King Louis IX of France found the world’s first institution for blind people (the Quinze-Vingts hospice) in Paris.
Leprosy

During the 1100’s Leprosy was a common cause of people becoming disabled during this period. Frequently losing fingers and toes and becoming disfigured by this frightening disease, people with leprosy were shunned and quarantined in ‘leprosariums’ throughout Europe.

This was an early example of the confinement and segregation of disabled people and the belief that this was the devil’s work or that people with leprosy were being punished by God.

Leprosy was renamed Hansen’s disease after Norwegian scientist Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen, who in 1873 discovered the slow-growing bacterium now known as *Mycobacterium leprae* as the cause of the illness. It is difficult to catch, and it can take many years to develop symptoms of the disease following an infection. Fortunately, people who catch the disease can now be cured with antibiotics.

Hansen’s disease can still affect people in resource-poor countries who live in crowded conditions with poor access to clean water and drainage - similar conditions to those experienced by people who contracted the disease in medieval times.
... Leprosy was a common cause of people becoming disabled.
Physical Perfection

The Renaissance period of art (the 1300’s) revived the Greek and Roman obsession with physical beauty and perfection. Disabled people were not included in any art form nor encouraged to participate in the arts as they did not meet the high standards of physical perfection required.

Aztec Cruelty

And across the other side of the world, disabled people were absent from any writing or art in Aztec society and were displayed in cages within the royal zoos, fed on scraps of food thrown at them by visitors.

Needless to say, their life expectancy was extremely short.
(disabled people) were displayed in cages within the royal zoos.
In **1340** King Edward III confiscated the hospital of St Mary of Bethlem in London to be used to house mentally ill people. This was later to be called Bedlam, a name now associated with the wrongful imprisonment and abuse of people with a mental illness.

Unfortunately, many of the inmates of Bedlam and similar asylums often died of disease compounded by the dirt and squaller and lack of food. This would include babies born to female inmates who became pregnant during their stay; abused by other inmates, visitors, or by those supposed to care for them.

The public paid to be allowed to visit these asylums and gawp at the inmates, some of whom quickly learned to act the ‘lunatic’ in order to entertain and receive payment or food for themselves.

Some disabled inmates perfected their ‘art’ and if released would often meet up and take their ‘Bedlam act’ around towns and villages to make a living. They would also team up with other disabled people and create what would be termed today as ‘street theatre’.
Fresh from an appearance at Bedlam

... often meet up and take their ‘Bedlam act’ around towns and villages.
**Statute of Labourers**

In **1351** The British government passed a law called the Statute of Labourers. This Statute made it against the law for people to give money to beggars who could work. However, they could give money to disabled people whom it was accepted, *could not* work.

Possibly as a protest against this negative assumption that disabled people could only ever be dependent on society’s charity, some disabled people learned how to make corn dollies, posies of flowers and other country craft to sell in order to have effectively ‘worked’ for any money they were given.

Another law was introduced in **1360** allowing the English monarch Edward III to seize the property of people with mental illness (De Praerogativa Regis). This was 20 years after he had created the ‘Bedlam’ asylum.

One could be forgiven for thinking that he had discovered a way of not only disposing of those who were opposed to him but, had also found a way to increase his property holdings at their expense!
The Sinful Poor

In the **1400’s** people with a mental illness or physical impairment were often portrayed as unkempt, frenzied, and dishevelled adding to this stereotyping of disabled people through history.

Also, during this century attitudes in rural Britain harden towards the ‘sinful poor’. Bigotry and ignorance lead to religious hysteria and the murder of disabled people across Europe. This included a large number of people who were mentally ill and accused of being in league with the devil. Many of them were burned alive.

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Agricultural Accidents

Parish records show that in the **1400’s** more people became disabled, especially amongst the poorer folk who lived and worked in the countryside. They became impaired mainly due to agricultural accidents, particularly at harvest time.

Many men, women and children lost limbs, or their sight or hearing due to lack of any safety measures on farms and small holdings.

It reached the stage where Parish Relief and Alms Houses could no longer cope with the level of need and many disabled people found themselves out on the streets and forced to beg in order to survive.
They became impaired mainly due to agricultural accidents, particularly at harvest time.
In 1470 Henry Tudor exploited the new technology of printing in order to produce artwork that pilloried and caricatured his rival, the disabled King Richard 111.

These were posted as flyers around London and the surrounding towns and villages.

Other people followed his example and printed leaflets portraying disabled people as grotesque freaks of nature. This negative stereotyping of disabled people continues today.
The 1500’s

In the 1500’s The Emperor of northern China Lu K’un ordered city officials to provide training for blind people in the arts. This included music, story-telling and fortune telling.

Roles for other disabled people were also found and they experienced a new respectability within Chinese society.
Witches

Across Europe in the **1500’s** millions of people, many of them disabled women or the mothers of disabled children, were accused of being witches: an impairment being viewed as the mark of the devil.

As previously mentioned, various symptoms of mental illness were also ascribed to witchcraft and those who were mentally ill were also burned.

It is estimated that there were between **10 and 20 million** burnings during this period.
Also, in the **1500’s** Girolamo Cardano is the first physician to recognise the ability of Deaf people to reason.

This went against the original teachings of Aristotle who, you will remember, stated that:

‘those born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason.’

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Mad Doctors

During the 1500’s, it also became a common practice for mad-doctors to chisel or drill a hole in the skulls of their patients to ‘let the devil escape’.

This ritual purification was called ‘pharmakos’ – from the same root as our word ‘pharmaceutical’.

Ordinary drill bits, augers and wood chisels were used for this procedure, unsurprisingly often resulting in the death of the patient.
Poor Law Act

The Poor Law Act of 1535 required town and parish councils to look after ‘every aged, poor and impotent person’ who was born or lived in the locality for three years.

The term ‘impotent’ was a term often used to describe physically disabled people or those who exhibited some form of mental illness.

Services were funded by donations encouraged by the Church.
Maimed Soldiers and Mariners

In 1593 an Act for the Necessary Relief of Soldiers and Mariners stated that:

‘Every parish shall be charged with a sum weekly towards the relief of sick, hurt, maimed soldiers and mariners.’

Many disabled veterans continued to wear their uniforms in order to differentiate themselves from non-military disabled people and therefore gain more sympathy and support.

Amending Acts raising the amounts to be collected from each parish are passed in 1597 and 1601.
... charged with a sum towards the relief of sick, hurt, maimed soldiers and mariners.
1600’s

In 1605, an eminent physician of the time, Dr Issac Hawes wrote in his journal:

‘Maniacs recover much sooner if they are treated with torture instead of with medicines.’

In 1616 Bonifacio publishes a treatise on sign language called Of The Art of Signs.

1620 and a Petition of the Poor Distracted of Bedlam was submitted to the King of England about the appalling conditions.

In 1664, During the Great Plague of London, the gap between disabled people and the rest of the community was reduced, as larger numbers of people experienced impairment, exclusion and poverty.
‘Maniacs recover much sooner if they are treated with torture instead of with medicines.’
In 1760 in Germany, France, Italy, and England, the first schools for Deaf people are set up.

At the same time in Paris, Phillippe Pinel, a French physician who was instrumental in the development of a more humane psychological approach to the custody and care of psychiatric patients, unshackled people with mental illnesses. His treatment is referred to today as ‘moral therapy’.

By the mid-eighteenth century, around 1774, the common methods in the UK for dealing with the insane were either to keep them in the family home, or to put them in a madhouse. This led to two forms of abuse: the first was the keeping of "legitimately" insane people in atrocious conditions, and the second the detention of those who were falsely claimed to be insane – in effect, private imprisonment.

Something needed to be done and the resultant 1774 Act for Regulating Private Madhouses aimed to better restrict the private trade in lunacy through two key provisions. Firstly, the Act set limits on the number of patients who could be admitted. Secondly, the Act created licenses and regular inspections for madhouse proprietors.
... the detention of those who were falsely claimed to be insane.

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Music in the 1800’s

Ludwig van **Beethoven** was a German pianist and composer widely considered to be one of the greatest musical geniuses of all time.

Born in Bonn, his works span the transition from the classical period to the romantic era in classical music.

However, his personal life was marked by a struggle against deafness, and some of his most important works were composed during the last 10 years of his life, when he was quite unable to hear.

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Art in the 1800’s

In the same period Vincent Van Gogh experienced temporal lobe epilepsy as well as bipolar disorder. He was born with a brain lesion which may have been aggravated by his use of absinthe. It is believed that his physician prescribed digitalis to treat his seizures.

One common side effect from this medicine is seeing yellow spots. Some historians wonder if this is why Van Gogh seemed to love to use the colour yellow in his art!

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Braille

Born in France in January 1809, Louis Braille was a French educator and inventor of a system of reading and writing for use by Blind or visually impaired people.

Blinded in both eyes as a result of an early childhood accident and resulting infection, he excelled in his education and received a scholarship to France's Royal Institute for Blind Youths. While still a student there, he began developing a system of tactile code that could allow blind people to read and write quickly and efficiently.

Inspired by the military cryptography of Charles Barbier, Braille constructed a new method built specifically for the needs of Blind people. He presented his work to his peers for the first time in 1824.

His system remains virtually unchanged to this day and is known worldwide simply as Braille.
... it remains virtually unchanged to this day and is known worldwide simply as Braille.
The Anglesey Leg

After his leg is shattered by cannon fire at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, Henry Paget, Marquess of Anglesey, begins using an artificial above-the-knee leg, with hinged knee, ankle and raising toes, developed by James Potts.

This was the world's first articulated wooden leg with moveable joints giving amputees greater freedom of movement.

The prosthetic limb became known as the 'Anglesey Leg' and Paget is said to have ordered four of these during his lifetime.
In **1834** The Poor Law Amendment Act was meant to reduce the cost of looking after the poor and impose a system which would be the same all over the country.

It ensured that conditions within the workhouses should always be WORSE than the worst conditions outside them!

**Workhouse Test**

Also, ‘the workhouse test’ was implemented. This meant that relief should only be available to those within the workhouses.

This results in more and more disabled people being forced into institutions in order to get relief. The alternative was to be homeless and beg for food.
Stereotypes

The stereotype of disabled people as pathetic and pitiable is given prominence in the portrayal of the character Tiny Tim in A Christmas Carol written by Charles Dickens in 1843.

Other publications follow, although often depicting the disabled character as evil or out to cause harm. An eye patch or a prothesis such as a hook replacing a hand having sinister or evil overtones.

This negative portrayal continues to this day.
The Lunacy Act

In 1845 The Lunacy Act and The County Asylums Act required asylums to be registered and to have a resident physician. However, these were often physicians who were addicted to drink or drugs and therefore unable to gain a more prestigious position within society.

Perversely these Acts also meant that patients lost their legal rights to challenge their detention or have recourse to any appeal.

The Acts also set up the Lunacy Commission which was meant to monitor and regulate asylums.

1846 and The Lunatics Friend Society is established by disabled author John Thomas Perceval (1803-1876), the son of a British prime minister who spent time in an asylum. He later writes two books about his time in asylums. The Society takes up the cases of over 70 patients and, in the process, exposed abuses in several asylums, including Bethlem Hospital (Bedlam). Perceval became a formidable campaigner for legal reform of the lunacy laws and better treatment for people with mental illness.
More events in the 1800’s

In 1847 The Manchester Institute for the Deaf and Dumb is established, now known as The Manchester Deaf Centre.

In 1848 The Poor Law Union is set up, a forerunner of generic social services. Farmers often acted as Poor Law Guardians, earning wage subsidies by disguising them as sickness payments.

1851 and The Census is the first attempt to monitor prevalence of impairment, specifically whether an individual is ‘blind, deaf or (an) imbecile’.

In 1868 The Second Poor Law Amendment Act encourages the setting up of infirmaries in the provinces, but there is no central funding or a national board to give direction.
Learning Disabled

In **1871 The Royal Albert Asylum** in Lancaster admits its first patients. It is one of only four regional institutions in England set up to care for and educate children with learning disabilities.

However, at this time legislation (such as the **1845 Lunacy Act**) is unclear about the distinctions between ‘learning disability’ and ‘mental illness’.

Also, those children with impairments such as Cerebral Palsy or those who were Deaf were mistakenly included in with learning disabled children.
The 1800’s continued

In 1872 work begins at Dearnley on a new workhouse on a 24-acre site bought by the Rochdale Poor Law Union. By the time it opens in 1877, it can hold 847 inmates, many of them disabled and employs 29 officers. The total cost for land and buildings is £85,000 (in today’s money, that would be worth £6.5 million).

In 1876 Henry Maudsley, a leading British psychiatrist of his day and co-editor of The Journal of Mental Science, promotes his belief that ‘lunatics’ are by-products of evolution, not fit for treatment. He is almost universally condemned by the psychiatric profession.

In the same year, In Salford, the Greengate Medical Mission is founded to help ‘spastic’ children (an obsolete term for children with cerebral palsy).
... the new workhouse can hold 847 inmates, many of them disabled.
**Deaf and Blind**

1878 and the **First World Congress to Improve the Welfare of the Deaf and Blind** is held – although Deaf and blind people are not allowed to attend!

Two years later in 1880 the **Second World Congress to Improve the Welfare of the Deaf and Blind** decides to promote oral instruction over sign language.

In addition, the **First international Conference of Deaf Educators**, held in Milan, declares that oral education is superior to manual education and passes a resolution banning the use of sign language in school. Schools in Europe and the USA switch to using speech therapy without sign language in education for Deaf people.
... although Deaf and blind people are not allowed to attend!
The Late 1800’s

During 1881 the **Invalid Children’s Aid Association** is founded by Allen Dowdeswell Graham, a clergyman, to help disabled children living in poverty. He writes:

“No poverty is bad enough, God knows, but the poor handicapped exist in a living hell. It’s up to us to do something about it.”

Five years later in 1886 **The Idiots Act** allows local authorities to build separate asylums for intellectually impaired patients. It also attempts to clarify distinctions between ‘idiots’, ‘imbeciles’ and ‘lunatics’, although again, those people with impairments that restrict their speech, or sight, or hearing are wrongfully labelled as ‘idiots’.
1889 and The Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and the Dumb recommends compulsory education for blind and Deaf children. For blind children this could be either in their own schools or in suitable other institutions.

However Deaf children were thought to benefit from being taught in separate schools or classes. This is the beginning of segregated ‘special’ classes and schools for disabled children.

1890 saw The Lunacy Act bring in a system of orders and certificates to prevent the wrongful admission of people to asylums. Unnecessary restraint becomes an offence.

Also, this year Deaf people formed the British Deaf and Dumb Association to protect and promote British Sign Language (BSL). A steering group set up to establish the constitution which includes six Deaf men and six hearing men. However, there are objections to the inclusion of the word ‘dumb’ in the organisation’s title, although this remained in their title until 1970.
1890 also saw the opening of The Bethesda Home for Crippled Children in Manchester. This provided a permanent home for physically impaired children. They encouraged children to develop skills for work.

This brings the plight of disabled children into public view and leads to an explosion of new philanthropic projects including open air schools, day and boarding schools for disabled children, and convalescent homes.

The National League of the Blind was also formed in 1890.

A few years later in 1894 The British Medical Journal (BMJ) began a campaign to improve standards of care for older, sick, and disabled people in workhouses.

Over the next two years, workhouses across England and Wales are visited by a BMJ ‘commission’ and their inspection reports, often very shocking, are published in the Journal. The BMJ’s efforts resulted in improvements in the standard of care provided.
1896 and Mary Dendy, a member of the Manchester School Board, persuaded the Board to set up special schools for ‘mentally handicapped’ children. She becomes convinced that ‘mentally handicapped youths’ continue to ‘pose a threat’ to the community after they leave school and advocated lifelong institutional care for them.

Later in 1898 she established The Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the ‘Feeble-Minded’.

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In 1897 *The Workmen’s Compensation Act* establishes the right to financial support for those injured in workplace accidents.

And in 1899 *The National League of the Blind* form as a trade union.

Also, in 1899 Gilbert Kerlew transforms the Band of Kindness from an animal welfare society into the *Crippled Children’s Help Society*, providing social and medical support for disabled children in Manchester.
The 1900’s

1902 The first practical, commercially available electronic hearing aid is made by Miller Reese Hutchinson.

1903 The Sandlebridge Boarding Schools and Colony for ‘mentally defective’ residents opens at Great Warford in Cheshire.

1905 Manchester opens the first local authority residential school for ‘crippled children’.

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Eugenics

1907 The Eugenics Education Society is formed, which would later be renamed the British Eugenics Society and, later still, the Galton Institute.

They believe that offering medical and social services to disabled people will lead to the degeneration of the human race.

The movement gains supporters across the political spectrum in the early part of the 20th century, including William Beveridge, the architect of the welfare state and Winston Churchill.

In 1910 the then Home Secretary Sir Winston Churchill favours the confinement, segregation and sterilisation of ‘feeble minded’ people.

Ironically, he himself experienced mental illness throughout his life. He managed his depression by painting landscapes and still life portraits, referring to his bouts of depression as his ‘black dog’.

60
... referring to his bouts of depression as his ‘black dog’.
Old Age Pension

1908 and The Old Age Pensions Act brought in a non-contributory benefit for people over 70 who have low incomes and could pass a character test, meaning that only those with a 'good character' could receive the pension.

Successful single claimants over the age of seventy were paid five shillings a week, while couples in which the husband was aged over seventy got seven shillings and sixpence per week.

The scheme was administered by the Post Office rather than the existing social welfare agencies as they were thought to be stigmatising.
National Insurance Act

In 1911 The National Insurance Act combines contributions from employees, employers, and the state to fund the payment of unemployment benefits and sickness benefits.

Sickness benefit was reduced after six months and paid as a disablement benefit.
Mental Deficiency Act

In 1913 The Mental Deficiency Act categorised people with learning disabilities and mental health issues as ‘idiots’, ‘imbeciles’, ‘feeble-minded’ or ‘moral defectives’.

Many people acquire their diagnosis of mental deficiency because of extreme childhood adversity or institutional care.

Gradually, unmarried mothers also began to be placed in this ‘moral defective’ category. They were often the servants of those influential men who, having made them pregnant, conveniently had them declared morally defective and placed in asylums!

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St Dunstan’s Organisation

Arthur Pearson, who had lost his sight in mid-career, establishes the St. Dunstan’s Organisation in 1915.

St Dunstan's opened its flagship training, convalescent, care and holiday centre in Ovingdean, Brighton, in 1938.

By 1946, the year it returned to Brighton, the charity cared for over 2,000 blind ex-Service personnel. The charity's centre at Brighton was used as an eye hospital during WWII.
First World War

1918 brought the end of the First World War and the heightening of awareness of physical impairment issues. 1.5 million people lost limbs, were blinded, became deaf or suffer severe mental trauma or brain damage during the four-year conflict.

People who suffered shell shock were classed as mentally ill and, if severely affected were sent to an institution. Many people disabled during the war turned to the arts as a means of expressing the horrors that they had experienced.

In 1919 The Central Council for the Care of Cripples is set up in response to the tens of thousands of injured ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. The lives of disabled people are in the hands of medical professionals whose efforts are typically aimed at curing them in order to reduce the ‘burden’ on society.

After various name changes and mergers, the Council exists today as Disability Rights UK.
... millions lost limbs, were blinded, or became Deaf.
March of Blind Workers

In 1920, partly bowing to pressure from a march of Blind workers, the British government supported The Blind Persons Act, which requires local authorities to register blind people and make arrangements for their welfare.

The 1920 blind march was a protest march to London of 250 blind people from across the United Kingdom. It was organised by the National League of the Blind (NLB) to protest poor working conditions and poverty experienced by blind people. In particular the NLB raised concerns over the conditions in workshops run to provide employment to the visually impaired by various charities. The marchers assembled at Newport, Manchester and Leeds on 5 April and marched to London, assembling at Trafalgar Square on 25 April. They were greeted by a crowd of 10,000 who listened to speeches from Herbert Morrison and trade union leaders. The march leaders met with prime minister David Lloyd George on 30 April, who made few promises apart from to pay for the marchers' rail tickets home.
This photograph has been provided by the Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Archive.
In 1921 The National Society for Lunacy Law Reform is established. It largely consisted of angry former patients critical of their experiences and complaints being dismissed by the authorities. It views medical treatment as mere ‘window dressing’ for what are in essence custodial and punitive practices.

1922 Rachel Grant-Smith, herself an ex-mental hospital patient, adds to calls for reform of the system when her pamphlet, The Experiences of an Asylum Patient, is published.

1930 The Mental Treatment Act brings in the concept of voluntary patients and recommends out-patient clinics and observation wards.
During **1933 Harry Jennings** and his disabled friend **Herbert Everest**, both mechanical engineers, invent a lightweight, steel, collapsible wheelchair.

Although the basic design remains the same, modern materials have now made the self-propelled wheelchair much lighter and easier to fold away.

Powerchairs driven by small electric motors have since developed and have now incorporated stair climbers and other access aids.
From Handicapped to ECT

1936 and a group of disabled people in New York City called **The League for the Physically Handicapped** is formed to protest against discrimination by the Works Progress Administration. They eventually generate over 1,000 jobs nationwide.

1937 and a report on health services by Political and Economic Planning points out that the poor treatment received by some in former workhouses has led to impairments. It calls for the setting up of a **National Health Service**. It was thought to have influenced the later **Beveridge Report** (1942).

Also, in 1937 Italian neurologist Ugo Cerletti develops **Electro Convulsive Treatment (ECT)**, convinced that induced convulsions were useful for the treatment of schizophrenia.

1940 and as the war economy booms, a severe labour shortage looms. The Government introduces a scheme to train and employ disabled people.

Out of 185,000 people previously considered unemployable, all but 18,000 are employed.
Insane Patients Helped by Electric Shock Treatment

Fighting insanity with electric shock is the most dramatic recent advance in the field of medicine. At the New York State Psychiatric Institute, in New York City, seemingly hopeless cases of the most common forms of insanity, schizophrenia and dementia praecox, have been shocked back to apparent mental health by the new treatment. Electrodes, at the ends of a caliper-like instrument, are placed just in front of the ears on the patient’s head. From seventy to 100 volts of current pass through his brain. The result is a violent convulsion resembling an epileptic seizure. In some cases, a single electric shock achieves what seems to be a medical miracle, restoring the patient to sanity. Previously, insulin, snake venom, and metrazol, have been used to produce shock. The electric treatment is painless, leaves no after effects, and costs less than shock-producing drugs.

Simple apparatus for treating insanity by electric shock. At right, electrodes are being adjusted to the head of a sufferer.

Source unknown
The Queen’s Cousins

In 1941 The Queen’s cousins, Nerissa and Katherine Bowes-Lyon were admitted to, ironically, the ‘Royal’ Earlswood Hospital, a mental institution in Redhill, Surrey. Nerissa was aged 22, and Katherine was only 15 years old. Both were apparently born with severe learning difficulties according to the family. The pair were not encouraged to talk or participate in family gatherings and were officially classed as “imbeciles” by the time they were admitted to Earlswood.

They were the respective third and fifth daughters of John and Fenella Bowes-Lyon. John was the elder brother of Queen Elizabeth, who later became known as the Queen Mother.

Nerissa died aged 66 in 1986 and was buried in Redhill Cemetery. According to The Telegraph, only hospital staff attended her funeral, and her grave was marked with plastic tags and a serial number.

Having spent 72 years of her life in institutionalised care, Katherine managed to outlive her sister by a further 28 years and died in 2014 aged 87.
1942 saw the **Beveridge Report** bringing about changes to the **Health and Social Security System** which is to be improved through the creation of a **National Health Service (NHS)** and extensions to existing social insurance.

However, benefits to disabled people will depend on the causes rather than the consequences of impairment. This meant that people disabled through war would be given priority over those people disabled from birth. Also, those born with a condition that worsened through aging would also be ignored.

The Beveridge Report also highlighted the ‘five giant evils’ on the road to reconstruction: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness.

War pensions are more generous than those for industrial accidents and old age, and themselves dependent on the rank of the ex-serviceman. All pensions depend on medical assessments of rather crude measurements of impairments.
Quota System

During **1944 The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act** sets up a quota system requiring employers with 20 or more employees to ensure that at least 3% of their workforce were disabled people.

In the same year, **The Education Act** concedes that mainstream schools are likely to be the most appropriate environment in which to teach disabled children.
1945 saw the setting up of The National Spinal Injuries Centre by neurologist Ludwig Guttmann at Stoke Mandeville Hospital to treat servicemen and women who sustain spinal cord injuries in World War Two.

Four years later the first Stoke Mandeville Games were held, later commonly regarded as the birth of the Paralympic movement. This was the start of the Super-Crip stereotype, where, if you were unable to overcome adversity as a disabled person, you were considered a failure. This leaves those born with an impairment in a no-win situation,
Industrial Injuries

The National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act paves the way in 1946 for the payment of compensation not just for loss of earnings but also for loss of ‘faculty’ attributed to industrial accident or prescribed disease.

Invacar Company

The Invacar company is also founded in 1946, going on to win a government contract to supply transport for physically impaired people throughout the 1950s and 1960s. With its distinctive pale blue colour, the Invacar was a common sight and went through about 50 versions. Driving the vehicle becomes illegal on UK roads in 2003 as it does not meet new safety standards.
National Health Service

The brain child of Health Minister Aneurin Bevan, the National Health Service (NHS) is formed in 1948 and becomes the umbrella term for the publicly-funded healthcare systems of the United Kingdom (UK).

The founding principles were that services should be comprehensive, universal, and free at the point of delivery—a health service based on clinical need, not ability to pay.

Former voluntary hospitals and Poor Law infirmaries all become part of the NHS.
Medical Straight Jacket

As one of the major innovations in psychiatry, enabling far more people to be discharged after relatively short stays on psychiatric wards, the drug chlorpromazine is produced in 1950 to treat schizophrenia, mania, and other so called mental illnesses.

It also played a major part in the closure of asylums begun in the 1960s.

However, MH System Survivors referred to the drug as a medical straight-jacket because of its over-riding lethargic effect.

In 1959 The Mental Health Act abolishes the distinction between psychiatric and other hospitals and encourages the development of community care.
The 1960’s

During the **1960’s** Disabled people on the whole were segregated by society, incarcerated in institutional care, or reliant on the support of family members, and were thereby unable to participate in mainstream society.

Many of the institutions and charities that emerged during this time claimed to represent disabled people but rarely had any representation of disabled people on their management committees or boards. They also perpetuated the image of disabled people as being needy and objects of pity in order to encourage charitable giving from the public – tugging at public heart strings, especially at Christmas time.

Ironically, much of the money raised was used to pay for running costs and therefore did not directly benefit their disabled residents. The non-disabled ‘disability professionals’ who emerged from this period also became the ‘voice’ of disabled people. Listened to by the media and government, they maintained the status quo and continued to benefit from the disabled people placed in their care.

It is from this period that many disabled activists emerged in the seventies and eighties, fighting for equality and human rights for disabled people and challenging the corrupt status quo.
In 1961 Enoch Powell, Minister of Health, announces the decommissioning of mental hospitals as part of the move towards ‘care in the community’.

In his famous ‘water tower’ speech to The National Association for Mental Health, he foresaw a halving of acute patient numbers in psychiatric hospitals over the next 15 years.

Powell also stated that many of the existing institutions were not fit for purpose and should be closed down.
Social Services Act

In 1965 The Disablement Income Group is set up to push for reform to social security for disabled people.

In 1970 The Local Authority Social Services Act creates a single social services department in each local authority area in England and Wales.

The departments are responsible for domestic help, meals and recreation services, registration of independent, residential homes and social work support.

Crippencartoons.com
The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act (1970), introduced by North West MP Alf Morris, is the first in the world to recognise and give rights to disabled people. Local authorities are given the responsibility of providing welfare services, housing, practical assistance for people in their own homes, meals (provided at home or community centres) and adaptations to people’s homes.

The Act also gives disabled people the right to equal access to recreational and educational facilities, including help with travel.

Councils also have a duty to provide educational facilities for children who are both blind and Deaf. This was later extended to include autism and dyslexia. Buildings open to the public are required to provide parking and toilet facilities for disabled people.

However, the Act is seen by its critics as giving even greater power to professionals and medical specialists.

Also, in conjunction with this Act and as a response to campaigning by disabled people, Attendance Allowance is introduced in an attempt to cover the extra costs of disability in the widest sense.
MIND and Blue Badges

The National Association for Mental Health launches the MIND campaign in 1971 to clarify its policy and aims and to attract funds. It is the Association’s first major public education campaign.

The organisation later changes its name to MIND.

Also, in 1971 Disabled driver badges (now known as Blue badges) for cars are introduced with exemptions for parking and other access.
In **1972** **Jack Ashley** (1922-2012), a Parliamentary campaigner for disabled people, sponsors the pivotal motion in the House of Commons making a distinction between legal and moral obligation.

Jack Ashley’s ability to follow the proceedings of the House of Commons (via the output from the stenographers) helps inspire the development of live *captioning and subtitles* on television to benefit Deaf and hearing-impaired people.
Paul Hunt

Paul Hunt (1937–79), a resident in the Le Court institution in Hampshire, had a letter published in the Guardian in 1972 inviting other disabled people to unite and form a representative group to explore the issue of disability in its broadest sense.

He suggested the aim should be to consider what changes in society are required if severe disability is either to be eradicated or become no bar to full social participation.

Paul’s first aim was to initiate a discussion on the form of organisation needed to forge a way forward in solving this vast and complex situation facing disabled people and find a solution.

In 1974, in discussion with others, he drafted the Aims and Policy Statement. The plan was to organise a weekend long policy conference in London where a final draft policy would be agreed.

The organisation that formed from this was called the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS). UPIAS also wrote a paper called Fundamental Principles of Disability.

In this paper, UPIAS set out the ideas that are now called the social model understanding of disability.
Vic Finkelstein

Also, in 1974 Vic Finkelstein, a disabled academic and a leading member of UPIAS, wanted to use polemical argument to draw out the key issues that were being thrashed out in the circulars. These were:

1. The importance of establishing that impaired people were not just disadvantaged but oppressed by the way society was organised.
2. The necessity to look outwards at society, not inwards at personal feelings, to understand what disabled people were facing.
3. To get to grips with the fundamental causes of oppression and not get bogged down by arguments and discussions around social attitudes.
4. The importance of using the words Against Segregation rather than For Integration. The former being the actual situation and the latter being almost subservient.

During this year Vic Finkelstein also wrote his seminal work ‘Are We Oppressed?’
Mobility Allowance

In 1976, a new cash benefit - the Mobility Allowance - is introduced to allow disabled recipients to choose the best way of meeting their mobility needs, whether driving a car, using a taxi or a mobility scooter.

Although subject to some abuse, the system has provided thousands of disabled people with independence. The charitable arm of the organisation has also provided funding for vehicle adaptations including access ramps, hoists, and hand controls for those unable to use their legs on the vehicle foot pedals.
1977 saw the launch of SHAPE, a disability-led arts organisation which worked to improve access to culture for disabled people by providing opportunities for disabled artists.

SHAPE’s founding principle and philosophy is that all disabled people should have the opportunity to participate fully in arts and culture within an inspiring and inclusive arts sector, accessible to all.

Also ensuring disabled people have active and influential roles in arts and culture - as leaders, artists, participants and audiences.

*Image courtesy of SHAPE ARTS*
Crippen and Cribb

Dave Lupton’s alter ego Crippen emerged in 1980 and began to create cartoons based upon the social model understanding of disability, challenging the inaccessible society.

Also, in the early 1980s disabled artist Steve Cribb used digital art to employ humour and visual imagery in a sophisticated way to engage people in disability politics through an accessible format.
In the 1980’s Ian Dury was a disabled singer song-writer who flaunted his polio induced impairments in his act. Accompanied by his backing group, the Blockheads, he reclaimed words that were seen as derogatory such as ‘spastic’ and ‘cripple’. His songs were received as empowering by other disabled people who supported him and who flocked to his shows.

His legendary Spasticus Autisticus album was actually commissioned by the International Day of Disabled People. However, they got more than they bargained for with his extremely provocative lyrics. The album was initially banned by BBC but was later allowed to be played to much acclaim.
In 1981 disabled people began to self-organise, challenging the many organisations ‘for’ that they claimed were excluding them from the decision making processes that affected their lives.

The United Nations designates 1981 as The International Year for Disabled People. Disabled people do not play a large part in most of its key events. Their response is to challenge the ‘for’ of the Year and insist on the ‘of’ aiming at self-organisation.
Disability People's International (DPI) was formed in the International Year of Disabled People. Disabled people from many groups and organisations around the world attended a conference run by Rehabilitation International - a world-wide organisation for disabled people.

Disabled people were angry that the non-disabled people were excluding them from decision making and using their power to keep control from disabled people. DPI gave disabled people from around the world a chance to share their different experiences of campaigning and to learn from each other.

Around the world many societies do not take disabled people's needs into account, and DPI realised that because of this, discrimination needs to be dealt with at an international level.

In 1981 The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP) was also set up, a national coalition of organisations controlled by disabled people to campaign for equality and human/civil rights.

The organisation is still active as the UK Disabled People’s Council.
Disability Arts in 1981

As well as being the international Year of Disabled people, 1981 also had the Carry On Cripple season of feature films about disability at the National Film Theatre, programmed by Allan Sutherland and Steve Dwoskin.

The creation of Path Productions, then the only company to integrate the non-disabled, physically and mentally disabled performers was also formed in this year.

Plus, Artsline was founded as the London-based provider of disability access information to the arts, leisure and entertainment sector.
The first **Covent Garden Day of Disabled Artists** takes place in **1983** - Organised by Geoff Armstrong, then an arts worker for Shape.

Also, in **1983 The Mental Health Act** reduces the length of compulsory orders, narrows definitions of mental impairment, and requires consent to treatment three months after admission.
Disability Arts continued to grow in this year:

The organisation **DaDa** (Disability and Deaf Arts) was founded, then known as **Arts Integrated Merseyside**. It becomes one of the first **Disability Arts Forums** led by disabled people.

The **Fair Play** campaign for disabled people in the arts founded. This supports children and young people with disabilities and additional needs, and their families.

Also, in **1984** the **DPI** helped to persuade the United Nations to change their Declaration of Human Rights to include disabled people.
Greater Manchester Coalition

In **1985** An event is held in July at County Hall, Manchester, for disabled people. It is attended by more than 100 people. It results in the formation of the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP).

As one of the earliest organisations **run and controlled by disabled people**, it aimed to promote the independence and integration of disabled people in society; identify and challenge the discrimination faced by disabled people in society; and encourage and support the self-organisation of disabled people.

**1985** continued with Manchester Town Hall being picketed by the Disabled People’s Steering Group as it was not accessible. Disabled people also successfully lobby for the Greater Manchester Council’s Equal Opportunities Unit posts to be reserved for disabled people. This is possibly the first instance of such designation of posts in the country, prior to the enactment of equalities legislation.
Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)
No Kidding – increasing awareness of disability through puppetry.

Also, in 1985 The first **Centres for Independent Living** are established in the UK in Derbyshire and Hampshire, allowing local disabled people choice and control over their own support.

The GLC funds a seven-month pioneer project during 1985 for ‘**No Kidding**’, a project using puppets to increase awareness of disability in Junior Schools. Company of four performers with and without disabilities.

1985 also saw the publication of Ellen Wilkie’s **Pithy Poems**.

*Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Archive*
The **Disability Arts In London (DAIL)** magazine was launched in **1985** with Elspeth Morrison as Editor.

This magazine initially reported on disability arts events around the London area but very soon began to cover events around the country and provided a voice for disabled artists who were turning to their art to protest against the discrimination they faced within society. Elspeth was followed by Kit Wells, and then Colin Hambrook, who later went on to create **Disability Arts Online (DAO)**.

*Image courtesy of DAO*
Disabled Person’s Act (1986)

The Disabled Person’s Act (1986) strengthens the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires local authorities to meet the various needs of disabled people.

Section 2 of the Act enabled the appointment of representatives for people with physical and learning disabilities, as well as those with mental illnesses. Representatives would have access to records and information relating to the person concerned and the services they received.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1986

The organisation DaDa (Disability and Deaf Arts) breaks away from Shape.

Survivors Speak Out is founded, an important networking organisation for the mental health system survivor movement in the UK. The initial objectives of the organisation are to produce a newsletter and to organise a national conference.

John McGrath appointed Development Officer for Arts Integration Merseyside, a Shape type service, with funding from Merseyside Arts. Later job-sharing with a disabled woman, Mandy Colleran. By 1987 the organisation will have two disabled women workers and a User’s Committee of 90% disabled people. It will later become North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF).

Workshops at the Mulberry Day Centre Deptford - the start of what will become Heart 'n' Soul - run by Shape and the Albany Empire, Deptford. Their first show is The Great Rock and Roll Dance, in which they are joined by jazz group Jodelko.

Working Parts is formed with the aim of promoting visual theatre, puppetry and music by and for disabled people through performance and/or workshops. Funded by Haringey Arts Council.
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1986

The Mockbeggar Theatre Company is set up. Their aim is to work with disabled and Deaf people to develop their skills and knowledge through theatre workshops and performances.

Arts Integration Merseyside (later to become North West Disability Arts Forum) withdraw from the Shape Network at the Chorley Conference.

The first issue of Disability Arts in London (DAIL) edited by Artsline. The magazine is co-owned by LDAF, Artsline and the Arts Media Group.

The Common Ground Sign Dance Theatre is set up. It pioneered a style of dance performance which integrates Sign Language into choreography, creating a new art form.

The Annual conference of Shape Network Workers and Associates.

Paper presented by Vic Finkelstein. One of the themes was that disabled people constitute an oppressed group in society.

The organisation DaDa (Disability and Deaf Arts) breaks away from Shape.
... to work with disabled and Deaf people to develop their skills.

Crippencartoons.com
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1987

The national conference of Survivors Speak Out eventually takes place in the autumn and brings survivor activists from different parts of the UK together for the first time.

Heart 'n' Soul is founded. An award-winning creative arts company and charity who believe in the power and talents of people with learning disabilities.

Deaf artist Trevor Landell is awarded a place to study for MA in print making at Royal College of Arts.

DAIL gets its first full-time editor: Elspeth Morrison.

Live Launch of LDAF on 25th April at the Waterman’s Centre, Brentford.

Maggie Woolley, presenter of See Hear is appointed Assistant Producer, the first deaf person ever to achieve this in National TV.

The launch of Half Moon Young People's Theatre – a youth theatre for young people with physical disabilities.
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1987

The **Arts and Disabled People** seminar at the Albany Centre, Deptford, comes to a stop when the seven disabled people present, led by Anne Rae, Chair of **LDAF**, withdraw to consider their position.

Victory over funding for the **Graeae Theatre Company** after an all-day meeting at the Arts Council. There original application having been turned down earlier in the year.

**Geoff Armstrong** is appointed development worker for **LDAF**.
Independent Living Fund (ILF) - 1988

The Independent Living Fund is set up in 1988 to allow disabled people to live in the community if they choose, rather than live in residential care. Unfortunately, the fund was closed down in 2016 prompting outrage and protest by disabled people throughout the country.

The government later introduced the Transition Fund to help disabled young people between the ages of 16 and 21, who are leaving school or children's services, to be more independent and to continue spending time with other people.
Also, in **1988** disabled actor **Nabil Shaban** was denied work on Granada's Microman children's TV series, because executive producers are worried that children would find him frightening.

Over sixty people demonstrated outside Granada studios against the dropping of Nabil Shaban from Microman. (Organised by Brian Lewis and Norman Colledge of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People and Ian Stanton of GMCDP.)

*Photo courtesy of Nabil Shaban*
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1988

The Talent '87 conference produces an embryonic European Disability Arts Forum (EDAF). UK reps are Geoff Armstrong (LDAF), Sian Vasey (Artsline) and Rob Tiplady (Green Jam).

Graeae Women's Company invited to tour Malaysia.

Launch of Cabaret Club at the Diorama. (later to become the Workhouse) Allan Sutherland comperes with Isobel Ward and Keith Armstrong.

London's first fully accessible dark-room and studio to be opened in Hendon - a project by CRAB and CLIC.

Maggie Woolley appointed first disabled Director of Shape.
Three disabled people went into a pub ...

... the Launch of Cabaret Club at the Diorama.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1989

**Ian Stanton’s** music cassette *Shrinkin’ Man* is launched. It includes Chip On Yer Shoulder, S.O.S. and Talking Disabled Anarchist.

**Linda Moss**, Arts Council Disability Officer, criticises bad integrated companies in DAIL article *Towards a Disability Culture - A View from Outside* for including disabled performers to attract funding and as their apology for not reaching the highest standards.

There is **outrage among disabled people** when they find that the **Arts Council** is applying for **exemption from employment quota**. An open letter in DAIL magazine to Luke Rittner, Secretary General of the Arts Council, by Allan Sutherland, takes issue with their application for exemption from the employment quota for disabled people.

The casting of a **non-disabled actor** to play Christie Brown in *My Left Foot* is widely criticised by disabled people, including actor Nabil Shaban writing in DAIL magazine.
Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1990

In 1990 The London Disability Arts Forum’s exhibition ‘Out of Ourselves’ was the first public exhibition of disability visual arts. It was then that Tony Heaton first met fellow sculptor Adam Reynolds whose work ‘Suitcase’ first convinced Heaton of the value of exhibiting with other disabled people.

1990 also saw the launch of the irreverent Tragic but Brave Roadshow, with Wanda Barbara, aka Barbara Lisicki, Johnny Crescendo aka Alan Sutherland and the late Ian Stanton. The show also incorporated their icon mascot 'Chip', a plaster statue of a young boy wearing a calliper and used as a collection box for the Polio Society. (Barbara Lisicki claims to have liberated it from outside of a W H Smiths!)

The organisation DaDa (Disability and Deaf Arts) changes its name in 1990 to North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF).

Wigan Disability Arts Forum is also formed during 1990.
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1990

**Cap in Hand?** a day conference on the 5\textsuperscript{th} February on the portrayal of disabled people in charity advertising at the Camerawork gallery.

Start of the **DAN Campaign for Accessible Transport**.

**The Campaign to Stop Patronage** with over two hundred disabled people demonstrating against ITV’s Telethon.

**The North West Disability Arts Forum (NWDAF)** launched (formerly Arts Integration Merseyside, briefly known as Merseyside Disability Arts Forum).

**The Disability Arts UK – OK** conference held at Beaumont College, Lancashire, to set up and launch the **National Disability Arts Forum (NDAF)**.

Sixteen **DAN protesters** arrested on Oxford Street in **Campaign for Accessible Transport** demonstration. All charges subsequently dropped when neither the court nor holding cells were accessible to wheelchair users!
Even more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1990

Launch of the ADAPT fund in 1990 to help make arts buildings accessible.

GLAD AGM decides to work to become an organisation controlled by disabled people.

Martin Pagel is elected to Manchester City Council. He is the first active disabled person to be elected as a councillor. He goes on to serve as Chair of the Social Services Committee and Deputy Leader between 1996 and 2004.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1991

Professor Colin Barnes’ book Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination is published in 1991. The book uses official statistics to prove that disability discrimination exists, denied by the Government of the day.

Taking Liberties is set up by disabled people to fight for the rights of disabled people to gain greater access to art activities in and around the Wigan area.

The Yorkshire Disability Arts Forum (YDAF) is set up.

CandoCo is founded by Celeste Dandeker and Adam Benjamin.

Apples and Snakes have funding from Greater London Arts to carry out research on disabled writers and performers.

EUCREA funding given to two European editions of DAIL magazine.
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1991

The Politics of Disablement published by Mike Oliver.

The first edition of Disability Arts Magazine (DAM) is launched. It was funded for a 12-month trial period by the four northern Regional Arts Associations in England and the Arts and Disability budget of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) publish Disabled People in Britain: A Case for Anti-Discrimination Legislation

The Cleveland Disability Arts Forum (CDAF) is launched in May.

A group of disabled artists, writers, representatives from arts organisations and statutory bodies in the North-East meet and decide to launch a Disability Arts Forum in the area: It is named NorDAF

Eight disabled DAN activists are arrested outside the TV studios in Leeds, demonstrating about Children in Need.
The **Shaken Not Stirred** installation by disabled artist Tony Heaton was performed. This was to launch the **1992 ‘Block Telethon’** protests by disabled people. The installation was a large pyramid of charity collection cans being destroyed by a false leg being thrown at them by Tony.

This was importantly the first disability arts event that received mainstream media coverage and opened up to the general public the realisation that disabled people didn’t want charity - we wanted our rights!

*Photograph courtesy of Disability Arts Online*
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1992

The continuation of the ‘Block Telethon’ protests lead to the Disabled People’s Disability Action Network (DAN) being formed. DAN carried out many protest actions over the next five years, involving disabled artists and musicians to promote their message. These actions focussed on the lack of accessible transport and other equality issues.

During the 1990s DAN continued to protest, organising many actions around the country to protest about the lack of accessible transport and the lack of any real legislation to give disabled people civil rights. DAN also protested about the people who were still made to live in institutions, usually run and controlled by charities like Leonard Cheshire. Their argument was that as these charities did not involve disabled people in any of the decision making, they should be challenged. And challenge them they did.
Photograph courtesy of Direct Action Network (DAN)
Some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1992

The second **Block telethon** protest takes place in July 1992.

1992 also saw the BBC soap opera **Eldorado** as the first television programme to have a regular character played by a disabled actor - Julie Fernandez. She went on to play Sean Maguire's girlfriend in BBC1 drama *Dangerfield* before landing the role of Brenda in *The Office*.

**Disability Arts Magazine** becomes the first arts organisation run, staffed and controlled entirely by disabled people to obtain revenue funding from the Arts Council of Great Britain. During this year, the magazine changes its name to **DAM**.

**Powerhouse**, a women only Workhouse, held a benefit for **Powerhouse Women's Group** in Newham who were trying to raise funds to set up a safe house for women with learning difficulties who were being harassed, threatened, and attacked by men.
Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Archive (GMCDP)
Even more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1992

The launch of Northern Disability Arts Forum (NDAF) takes place on 14th – 15th May 1992 at the Buddle Arts Centre, Wallsend.

The pilot of Inmates by disabled artists Allan Sutherland and Stuart Morris, is launched. This is a situation comedy set in a long-stay institution for disabled people.

The first Disability Awareness Day in Warrington is held in 1992. Still running today, this has become Europe’s largest (voluntary led) disability event and has encouraged and empowered other like-minded people to establish similar events in places as far away as Cornwall, Rotherham, Wigan, Knowsley, Crewe, Gibraltar and India.

Dreams of the Absurd an exhibition of paintings by Colin Hambrook is held at The Real Art Company, 330 Portobello Road, W10.)
... Dreams of the Absurd an exhibition of paintings by Colin Hambrook.
And some more Disability Arts Events that took place during 1992

Launch of **Graeae Youth Theatre Initiative**, following the appointment of Caroline Lucas as Training Development Co-ordinator as a response to the lack of training opportunities for disabled actors.

**Humberside Disability Arts Forum (HDAF)** is formed.

Also **DAsh** (Disability Arts Shropshire) formed as part of **Shropshire Disability Consortium** (SDC).

**Disability Awareness in Action (DAA)** is also launched as an international organisation of disabled people. It aims to provide support and information to disabled people so we can organise ourselves at national and international levels to raise awareness of disability issues with governments and policy makers. For instance, they have written a Resource Kit for disabled people's groups around the world.

**Disability Living Allowance** is also introduced in **1992**.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1993

High Spin Dance Company formed.

Deaf Arts UK founded by SHAPE London.

Launch of West Midlands Disability Arts Forum (WMDAF) on 8th May 1993.

Launch of Avon's new Disability Arts Agency with the Disability Arts Café.

Launch of Shropshire Disability Arts Initiative. A funding scheme for disabled people with arts projects.

Manchester becomes 1994 UK City of Drama, having included in its bid plans for a permanent Disabled People's Arts and Cultural Centre.

Disability Arts In London (DAIL) magazine is launched with Elspeth Morrison as Editor. Kit Wells and Colin Hambrook, amongst other disabled artists, later take on the mantle of Editor until the magazine closes down due to lack of funding in 2004.
Tony Heaton’s iconic 1994 sculpture, Great Britain From A Wheelchair is a key artwork within the history of disability arts - pointing to the aspiration to make the UK an accessible place for wheelchair-users.

The Disability Discrimination Act aspired to making all public transport in the UK accessible by 2025 - but the sentiment got dropped when the act was superseded by the Equality Act 2010.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1994

North West Shape relaunching as Full Circle Arts Changes (National Deaf Forum Theatre project) twenty performances nationally during 1994 with over a thousand Deaf people attending.

Mike Bramley (Chair, Derbyshire Disability Arts Forum) and disabled artist and cartoonist Steve Cribb both died this year.

Demonstration by Disability Arts Consortium to protest against Arts Council's decision to close its Disability Unit. (6th July 1994).

Accessible transport demos commenced across the UK, organised by Disabled People’s Direct Action Network (DAN). These took place throughout the summer of 1994 in several major cities in the UK.
Start of some real legislation for disabled people when the **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)** came into being following protests by disabled people.

This made it illegal to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the disposal or management of premises.

Service providers also had to make **reasonable adjustments** to enable disabled people to access their services.
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1995

Rights Now Day of Action to support second reading of Harry Barnes's Disabled Persons (Civil Rights) Bill.

Allan Sutherland proposes idea for a London Disability Arts Forum (LDAF) postcards project (later to be partly realised as Postal Strike)

Disability Arts Magazine (DAM) is closed down due to withdrawal of funding by the Arts Council.

Dave Thompson and Jackie Rotherham become the first disabled people employed by an NHS trust to oversee disability equality issues.
The National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) is co-founded by Baroness Jane Campbell, campaigner, and adviser for disability rights. The work of NCIL is pivotal in changing the landscape of services for disabled people.

Bowing to pressure from the National Centre for Independent Living and the Independent Living Movement, the government makes direct payments for social care legal in The Community Care (Direct Payments) Act. Direct payments lay the foundations for self-directed support, upon which initiatives such as

*Photograph courtesy of Baroness Jane Campbell*
Sue Napolitano (1948 – 1996)

Disabled artist and writer Sue Napolitano died this year.

Sue was in the Equal Opportunities Unit at Manchester City Council and was an accomplished writer, well known for her radical poetry but also producing long and insightful articles.

Sue was actively involved with the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) and in particular with its magazine, Coalition.

Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Disabled People’s Archive
Some other Disability Arts Events that took place during 1996

By September **1996** the **West Midlands Disability Arts Forum (WMDAF)** was up and running.

And in December **1996 Disability Arts In London (DAIL)** magazine moved to a new format. It was thought that the new landscape format would be more accessible with room to display more images.

*Photograph courtesy of Disability Arts Online*
Inmates, a play by Allan Sutherland and Stuart Morris is broadcast on BBC Radio Four on 15th November 1997.

This ninety-minute play set in a long stay institution for disabled people, starring disabled actors Matthew Fraser, Daryl Beeton, Jonathan Keeble, Gerard McDermot, Mandy Colleran, Mandy Redvers-Higgins and Dave Kent.

*Photograph of Allan Sutherland courtesy of Disability Arts Online*
Some Disability Arts Events that took place during 1998

West Midlands Disability Arts Forum (WMDAF) is established.

No Limits Experimental Theatre project set up by Artlink West Yorkshire. It is initially managed by Huddersfield Mencap and will develop into a theatre company.

An advertisement appears in Disability Arts In London (DAIL) magazine which read 'Hundreds of collecting cans going free'. The cans in question were the basis of Tony Heaton's sculpture, Shaken Not Stirred. (the installation was later rescued and donated by LDAF to the Holton Lee archive.)

LDAF launches Postal Strike! (2 March), Allan Sutherland's idea for the most accessible, wide-ranging exhibition of Disability Art ever (a set of postcards), involving as a central principle that artists would be paid for the use of existing work or commissioned to produce new work, implemented by Diane Pungartnik.
Breakthrough UK - 1998

Manchester City Council sets out to change the way training and employment are offered to local disabled people who are promised support to find real jobs (paid or voluntary), and training to do the work they want.

Lorraine Gradwell MBE is appointed to develop the partnerships to set up Breakthrough UK, a disabled people’s organisation which offers support for employment and independent living and also training and employment services under contract to Manchester City Council.
Ian Stanton, disabled singer/songwriter and active member of the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) died on 26th November 1998, aged 48.

His ironic lyrics encapsulated the humour as well as the anger underlying the civil rights struggle of disabled people, and his songs enlivened the public demonstrations by disabled activists in town centres across England.

Photograph courtesy of Manchester Disabled People’s Archive
Some disability related events that took place during 1999

Football Manager Glenn Hoddle sacked after announcing that “disabled people were being punished for their sins in a previous life”.

The Disability Rights Commission is established to investigate and enforce disability legislation, and to advise employers on how to secure equal treatment of disabled employees. This was chaired by Bert Massey who was formerly the Director of Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR).

The National Service Framework for Mental Health sets minimum standards and good practice guidelines. But it has shortcomings in the involvement of mental health system survivors and service users.
... The Disability Rights Commission chaired by Sir Bert Massey

Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia
When the part of the **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)** regarding building regulations came into being in 1999 the real and lasting improvement to this can be attributed to disabled artist Paddy Masefield who forced through the changes with his “sheer bloody-mindedness”. He refused to be put off when the Arts Council committee he was part of were basically asked to rubber stamp these regulations for access on new public buildings and improvements to existing public buildings. What Paddy did was to continually challenge the regulations which later became a revolutionary aspect of the DDA. This also meant, thanks to Paddy, that any National Lottery Grant application had to include full access provision. Paddy died after a battle with cancer in 2012 aged 69.

Paddy’s actions also allowed disabled people to train as Access Auditors at the Centre For Accessible Environments and be employed auditing public buildings throughout the UK. Unfortunately, as this aspect of the Act has never been followed up, there are thousands of access audits just gathering dust on the shelves in hospitals, town halls, and other public buildings, never having been read, never mind actioned!
Photograph courtesy of Wikipedia
Some disability related events that took place during 2000 - 01

In 2000 - The Representation of the People Act allowed patients in mental hospitals, other than those guilty of a criminal offence, to vote.

In 2001 - The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act extends anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people to cover education providers.
More disability related events that took place between 2001 - 03

In **2001** - The first **Dadafest**, the Disability and Deaf Arts festival, is held in Liverpool. The festival continues to this day as a biennial event and remains truly ambitious and international in scale, attracting disabled and Deaf artists from all over the world.

In **2002** - **Colin Hambrook** set up **Disability Arts Online (DAO)**, initially running as a channel on ArtsOnLine.org.uk.

**2003** is designated as **The European Year of Disabled People**.

Also, in **2003** - **British Sign Language (BSL)** is officially recognised by the government as being a full, independent, language. This raises the status of BSL and leads to training more Deaf BSL tutors and interpreters.
Launch of Disability Arts Online - 2004

2004 saw the launch of Disability Arts Online (DAO) which is an organisation led by disabled people, set up to advance disability arts and culture through the pages of their journal. Their raison d’être is to support disabled artists, as much as anything by getting the word out about the fantastic art being produced by artists within the sector.

DAO also gives disabled artists a platform to blog and share thoughts and images describing artistic practice, projects and just the daily stuff of finding inspiration to be creative.

Later DAO launched a brand-new website in 2016 based on feed-back from its readers and contributors and incorporating new navigational tools.

DAO now carries far more articles and features and is recognised as the leading platform for disability arts around the world.
Amendments to the DDA (2004 -05)

In 2004 The legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments in order to make buildings more accessible came into effect.

The following year The Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act extends protection to land, transport, small employers and private clubs, extends the definition of disability and introduces a duty for public bodies to promote disabled people’s equality and ‘involve’ them in the design of services and policies.

Crippencartoons.com
More disability related events that took place in 2005

The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit published its report, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, setting out recommendations for achieving equality for disabled people by 2025. This report marks the first official recognition of the social model understanding of disability.

People with learning disabilities are given hospital passports containing information to enable hospital staff to treat them appropriately. It contains ‘red’ information, on issues such as how people express pain, important ‘amber’ information and ‘green’ information on likes and dislikes.

*Photograph courtesy of Mencap*
Adam Reynolds (1959 – 05)

In **2005** the disabled artist **Adam Reynolds** died.

As well as being an artist he was also a curator, activist, gallery owner, mentor who helped shape the UK’s art scene during the 1990s.

After his death, **Shape Arts** set up the **Adam Reynolds Memorial Bursary** in his honour.

*Photo Installation of work by Adam Reynolds. Image © Dani Bower (Disability Arts Online)*
The Disabled Avant-Garde Today!

In 2006 the launch of The Disabled Avant-Garde Today! Installation, within a series of exhibitions, partnerships and critical debates. Written and performed by disabled artists Katherine Araniello and Aaron Williamson at the Gasworks Gallery in Vauxhall, South London.

Katherine is well known for her satirical videos in which she has parodied everything from a Damion Hurst Installation of a giant charity collection statue to the Paralympic games.
Disability related events that took place in 2007

The role of the Disability Rights Commission is transferred to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which has powers to issue guidance on, and enforce all the equality legislation, covering race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age.

Also, in 2007 The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities opens for signature.

And later in the year the Government’s Putting People First strategy proposes that all users of social care should have access to a personal budget to enable them to exercise choice and control over their support.
Barrier Man - 2009

As Barrierman, Aaron Williamson took to the streets of Liverpool in a High-Vis vest to pose as a ‘Health and Safety’ officer.

Erecting temporary barriers around the city using just cones and plastic tape. The deaf performance artist halted or misdirected shoppers and traffic over the course of a day whilst being covertly filmed.

At one point, the Barrierman briefly closed down the Tate Liverpool Art Gallery.

Photograph courtesy of Disability Arts Online
Disability related events that took place in 2010

The UK Government ratifies the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities**. It applies to the 12 million disabled children and adults in the UK.

**The Equality Act** is passed by Parliament days before the general election. It outlaws direct or indirect discrimination and harassment in employment, vocational education and the provision of goods and services, for a total of nine protected characteristics including disability. It also outlaws discrimination because of association with a disabled person or because of the perception that someone is disabled.

**The Right to Control** pilots begin. This new legal right gives disabled people more choice and control over the support they need to go about their daily lives. Disabled adults are able to combine the support they receive from six different sources and decide how best to spend the funding to meet their needs.
Welfare Reform Bill - 2011

The **2011 Welfare Reform Bill** proposed the replacement of the **Disability Living Allowance** with **Personal Independence Payments (PIP)**. This was to cause complete upset for disabled people reliant upon benefits when the **DWP** brought in outside contractors to make assessments of their needs. Protests followed with **Iain Duncan Smith** being pilloried by disabled activists as the architect behind this move which allegedly claimed the lives of thousands of disabled claiments (Ironically, he was later to get a knighthood for this!).
Hardest Hit Campaign

Launch of the Hardest Hit campaign, organised jointly by the Disability Benefits Consortium and the UK Disabled People’s Council.

It lobbies the government about the impact of welfare cuts.

Around 8,000 disabled people march on Parliament in May 2011.

Photograph courtesy of the Hardest Hit Campaign
Physical and Psychological Abuse

The BBC’s Panorama programme in 2011 exposes the physical and psychological abuse suffered by people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour at Winterbourne View, a private hospital in South Gloucestershire.

The public outcry following the broadcast leads to calls to close such institutions.

Copied from internal video of staff abusing residents in Winterbourne View (2011)
The report analyses the UK coalition government’s proposed welfare benefit changes and claims that the government’s consultation of changes to Disability Living Allowance fails to meet its own codes of practice; and that its report presents a highly misleading view of the responses it received.

The report is widely circulated on Twitter using the hashtag #spartacusreport. On the date of publication, it becomes a trending topic and receives backing from thousands of users including Stephen Fry, John Prescott, Alastair Campbell, Billy Bragg, Sue Perkins and Tim Minchin, as well as various disability rights campaigners.
The Paralympic Games - 2012

The Olympic Games and **Paralympic Games** are held in the United Kingdom. Extensive media coverage by Channel 4 portrays disabled people winning medals as elite athletes.

For many disabled people this was just another way in which society was able to construct an additional acceptable stereotype – the **Super Crip**; if you really tried hard you could overcome your impairments and achieve anything!
Parody of Paralympics - 2012

As the Disabled Avant Garde, Katherine Araniello and Aaron Williamson parodied the Paralympics’ logo with their Bad Mascots performance commissioned by Disability Arts Shropshire.

Katherine Araniello also parodied the channel 4 Meet the Superhumans advert for the Paralympics put out by Channel 4 with her own version, dressed as a Paralympian bouncing table tennis balls and juggling cotton buds.
ILF Closure - 2015

2015 saw the closure of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) despite protests by disabled people who tried to storm the House of Commons chamber during Prime Minister's Question Time.

The protest was unsuccessful despite support from cross-party MPs and a campaign led by Baroness Jane Campbell in the House of Lords.

Photograph courtesy of Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)
2016 also saw the launch of a brand-new web site for Disability Arts Online (DAO) magazine.

Based on feed-back from its readers and contributors from an online survey across the disability arts world, the new web site incorporated new navigational tools, improved access, and carried far more articles and features than before.

Colin Hambrook, Editor, also commissioned new work from disabled artists new to the scene, encouraging them to experiment with their genre.

Image courtesy of Disability Arts Online
The launch of the **National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA)**, a £1-million digital archive chronicling the history of disability arts in the UK, takes place in **2018**.

Alongside the website, the accessible NDACA research facilities at Buckinghamshire New University (which includes the NDACA Learning Wing and Repository of physical deposits) was also opened.

With over 3,500 images of artworks, photographs, films, articles and exhibitions telling the story of disability arts and the battle for disability rights in the UK.
Blue Figures by Colin Hambbrook - Photograph courtesy of DAO
Dolly Sen - 2019

Dolly Sen curated Art & Protest: What’s there to be mad about? for the Bethlem Gallery in London - situated on the grounds of The Bethlem Royal Hospital which dates back to 1676.

Artworks included her own parody of the charity collecting can Help the Normals, turning the notion of disabled people as objects of pity on its head.

She also included banner-sized artworks from a series by Vince Laws called DWP Deaths Make Me Sick - which documented the deaths of individual disabled people following the impact of the stringent assessment procedures brought into force by Ian Duncan Smith.
Anna Berry’s curated exhibition, **Art and Social Change: The Disability Arts Movement** ran from Sat 11th January to Sun 22nd March 2020 at MAC Birmingham.

This exhibition, developed and curated by Anna, is the culmination of her placement, showcasing her new skills while linking to the wider programme at MAC.

*Photograph courtesy of Disability Arts Online (DAO)*
Electric Bodies - 2020

Electric Bodies, which examines the origins and development of Disability Art, was launched in 2020 by DAO.

As well as many other events, it also included three short, animated films, narrated by Allan Sutherland with illustrations by Colin Hambrook Editor of Disability Arts Online (DAO).
#WeShallNotBeRemoved is an emergency response led by disabled people for disabled people working across the UK’s creative industries. Designed as a forum to advocate, campaign and support D/deaf, neurodiverse and disabled creative practitioners and organisations through and after the COVID pandemic.

The aims of the alliance include an effort to ensure a sustainable future for disability and inclusive arts in the UK.
Learning Disability Week - 2020

Gig Buddies is a programme by national charity, Stay Up Late, that supports people with learning disabilities to see live music through their volunteering befriending service. In response to the coronavirus lockdown, the charity has brought many of its services online including @Coronavirusfest – a virtual music festival that takes place every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8pm and 9pm to keep their beneficiaries, supporters and general public connected through music.

Photograph courtesy of Disability Arts Online
In conclusion we would like to thank the following people and organisations for permission to use their images and information for this publication.

A Disability History Timeline - The struggle for equal rights through the ages, edited by Shahnaz Ali OBE

The Manchester Disabled People’s Archive with Tony Baldwinson

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)

Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC)

Disabled people’s Direct Action Network (DAN)

Sue Elsegood – disabled activist

Peter Street – disabled poet and writer

Dolly Sen – disabled artist, writer, film maker and activist

Adam Reynolds – disabled artist, curator and activist

Paddy Masefield OBE – disabled artist, writer and activist

Jason Porath - Rejected Princesses series

Nancy Willis – disabled artist

Tony Heaton – disabled artist
Katherine Araniello – disabled performance artist and activist
Aaron Williamson - disabled performance artist and activist
Nabil Shaban – disabled artist, actor and activist
The Disability Benefits Consortium
The UK Disabled People’s Council
MENCAP
We Shall Not Be Removed - #weshallnotberemoved
National Disability Arts Collection and Archive (NDACA)
Allan Sutherland - Chronology of disability arts
Dave Lupton – Crippencartoons.com
Colin Hambrock - Disability Arts Online (DAO) magazine
Shape Art
Wikipedia
The Hardest Hit campaign