

Nothing About Us Without Us
Exhibition
Large Print Text 18pt

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Introduction panel

This exhibition is the second stage in a long-term project that looks at the representation of disabled people.

The museum is working with groups, campaigners and individuals to capture their stories and re-examine how the history of disabled people's activism is presented. We encourage you to let us know if you have any comments, objects or stories you would like to share to help to continue to tell this story. If you are interested in sharing your object or story as part of this project, please speak to a member of staff or contact mark.wilson@phm.org.uk

Timeline

The timeline on the wall is split into five sections: Early Days, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. Each section has an introductory label followed by photographs and labels with further information. Beneath the timeline is a shelf with pencils and pieces of card on it that visitors can use to write their own additions to the timeline and leave them on the shelf for other visitors to see.

The introduction to the timeline is as follows:

Is anything missing?

Add to the timeline using the cards and shelf. We would like to thank and acknowledge the work of Linda Marsh and Brian Hilton whose 'A Brief History of Disabled People's Self-Organisation' booklet, produced by the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, was used as the basis of this timeline.

All additional content was provided or guided by the exhibitions steering group.

Timeline Section One

Early Days

Many people do not realise that disabled people have led the way for around 100 years in campaigning for rights. Since the first recorded organisation of disabled people formed in 1890 (British Deaf Association), disabled people have grown into a strong campaigning force.

1890

The British Deaf Association (BDA) was formed in Leeds as The British Deaf and Dumb Association (BDDA).

1907

Disabled activists have played a prominent role in many protest movements. The fight for woman's suffrage is no

exception. Rosa May Billinghurst joined the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in 1907. She would go on to found the Greenwich branch of the WSPU in 1910. Billinghurst was involved in many militant protests. Her hand-tricycle, a type of wheelchair, attracted much attention and publicity. She would often use the tricycle to her advantage in protests, employing it as a battering ram against the police.

1920

National League of the Blind (a union of blind workers) marched to a rally in London in 1920, to demand better working conditions and pay. This set the stage for protest marches that many other people undertook in the 1920s and 1930s the most famous of which was the Jarrow March.

1944

The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act is passed as the number of disabled people increases due to World War II. The Act meant employers had to employ a percentage of disabled people. The act was not effective because it was never properly monitored.

1955

In 1955 a group of disabled people make their first short film, *At Home with Le Court*. After the success of the film, they establish a core film crew of four disabled people. They call themselves the Le Court Film Unit, after the institution they were living in at the time. The unit go on to make series of award-winning short films. Their work is groundbreaking as it shows disabled people representing themselves and trying to lead liberated and independent lives.

Le Court Film Unit was made up of Barbara Beasley (scriptwriter, narrator, production office), Brian Line (sound, co-editor), Laurie Mawer (camera, lighting), and Neville Thomas (founder, producer / director, co-editor).

1960

Disablement Income Group campaigned in the 1960s for an adequate income for disabled people who were not able to work. It was much harder for disabled people to gain work because of discrimination by employers or lack of accessibility in society.

1970

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act is the first in the world to give disabled people rights. Although the act was an important step forward. Many feel it gives too much power to medical professionals. Disabled Driver's Association at a Rally in Trafalgar Square, London, early 1970s.

Through the 1970s, members of the Disabled Drivers' Association campaigned for disabled people to have better support with mobility. The association was formed in 1948 under a different name, it is still going strong today as Disabled Motoring UK.

Group of disabled people from Rochdale getting ready to set off to the rally in London, to campaign for improved mobility for disabled people.

1972

The Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) was formed following Paul Hunt's letter to the Guardian newspaper in which he called for disabled people to form a 'consumer group', to put forward the views of disabled people.

1976

UPIAS publish 'Fundamental Principles of Disability' which identified the barriers disabled people face in society as the reason for us being disabled people, not the medical conditions we have. This was a considerable breakthrough and is the foundation for the ethos of the Disabled People's Movement.

1974

Alf Morris, Member of Parliament for Manchester Wythenshawe, was appointed as the first Minister for the Disabled. The position was established to help raise the status of disability issues within Parliament.

Timeline Section Two

1980s

The decade saw the rise of the campaign for anti-discrimination legislation, the call for buildings and the environment to be made more accessible to disabled people, and also disabled people supporting other campaigns against oppression

1981

The United Nations International Year of Disabled People gave the opportunity for disabled people to find the funding to set up groups and organisations of disabled people.

What is the social model of disability?

The social model argues that people are not disabled by their impairment or difference. But that it is the barriers and attitudes that society creates that disable people.

1983

Disabled People blocking the entrance to the Members' Car Park at Parliament in 1983, to support one of the unsuccessful anti-discrimination bills.

1984

People First is founded, it is a national self-advocacy organisation run by and for people with learning difficulties. Its aims are to speak up and campaign for the rights of people with learning difficulties. People First became a charity in 1996. In Manchester during the early 1980s, disabled people successfully campaigned for the Town Hall to be made wheelchair accessible. The picture below shows the opening of the new wheelchair accessible Town Hall Extension.

1985

The Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) was formed to promote the inclusion of disabled people in society.

1987

The Arts and Disabled People Conference in Manchester. This conference came about after disabled people campaigned for the cancellation of the 'Artability' conference. That conference had been organised without the involvement of disabled people, and was due to be held in a venue not accessible to disabled people, although it was a conference about disabled people and art. Disabled people also campaigned in support of other oppressed causes.

Here are pictures showing disabled people campaigning against the apartheid system of racial segregation in South Africa.

1984

Sue Croshaw with Kim Stallwood speaking in Trafalgar Square at World Day for Laboratory Animals.

Sue Croshaw was one of the founders of DAARE – Disabled Against Animal Research and Exploitation. Set up in the 1980s by a group of disabled people against animal testing who campaigned for all animal rights.

1990s

Activity by disabled people to campaign for our inclusion in society reached a high point in the 1990s. This was built on the foundation of disabled people in the 1970s establishing a focus on barriers in society (“disability”) rather than on a disabled person’s medical condition (“impairment”).

Timeline Section Three

1990s saw increased activity by disabled people lobbying the government for a law that makes discrimination against disabled people illegal. The picture below is of placards used in a protest in London during the mid 1990s as part of this campaign.

1993

Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) formed out of disabled people's frustration at the lack of success from other ways of campaigning (such as discussion) they are pictured here in Christchurch, promoting one of the earlier anti-discrimination legislation bills.

1992

Saw the successful protest against Telethon, a television show that raised money for charity. Disabled people felt that the language used and images shown were demeaning, portraying disabled people as objects of pity. The pictures show disabled people picketing London Television headquarters as part of the campaign.

1993

Disabled people protest outside The National and Local Government Officers' Association (NALGO) social club which was down a flight of stairs. This meant many NALGO members could not make use of the club.

One of the longest and strongest campaigns by disabled people has been to gain accessible public transport. To do this, disabled people have chained themselves to buses and trains, blocked roads, held up traffic and tried to get the politicians and general public to understand that disabled people want the right to travel the same way as non-disabled people.

The picture shows disabled people in London with a banner that sums up the feeling that disabled people should have the right to go where everyone else goes.

1991

Disabled people who were attending a national conference of disabled people in Manchester, holding a spontaneous piece of direct action. They are blocking the path of an inaccessible bus on Wilmslow Road as part of the long-running campaign to make public transport more accessible to disabled people.

1995

Protests by disabled people lead to the landmark introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act. This makes it illegal to discriminate against disabled people in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport.

1996

The term Neurodiversity is first used in a dissertation by Judy Singer, an Australian sociologist on the autism spectrum.

What is Neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is the concept that neurological differences should be recognized and respected just like any other human variation. These differences can include those labelled with Dyspraxia, Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Dyscalculia, Autistic Spectrum, Tourette Syndrome, and others.

1998

Neurodiversity first appears in print in an article by journalist Harvey Blume for The Atlantic newspaper.

‘Neurodiversity may be every bit as crucial for the human race as biodiversity is for life in general.’

Timeline Section Four

2000s

The Millennium brought little change to the need for campaigning by disabled people. Disabled people found themselves campaigning to protect the financial support given to those unable to take paid work and even defending the right to live.

2003

Developmental Adult Neuro-Diversity Association (DANDA) was founded an organisation run by and for neuro-diverse people. It was set up to represent and support neuro-diverse community.

2003

Deaf people have fought for many years for BSL (British Sign Language) to be recognised as an official language in its own right. The campaign was successful on 17 March 2003 when it was agreed by Parliament. Despite this, BSL is still not taught in schools alongside other languages, and deaf people still fight for adequate interpreter services. The picture below shows one of the protest marches in London, in the run-up to the BSL recognition legislation being agreed.

2005

Autistic Pride day was created in 2005 on the online forum Aspies for Freedom and is based on the same principles as LGBT pride and Black Pride. It is celebrated on June 18 worldwide, online and offline. During this decade welfare reform was high on the Labour Government's agenda. This included changes to the benefits for disabled people.

2005

The first Autscope conference and retreat takes place, it is organised and run by autistic people. It is set up as educational conference, a social gathering, and an opportunity for advocacy and networking. As well as offering an escape to an autistic-friendly space.

2006

Disabled people lobby the Labour Party Conference in Manchester. Disabled people were unhappy at the government's proposals to change the criteria for disabled people who were not able to work, receiving benefits.

2006

Not Dead Yet UK (NDYUK) was formed in response to the growing media focus on campaigns for 'the right to die' through assisted suicide. NDYUK saw these campaigns as an attempt at 'legitimising the killing of terminally ill and disabled people'. The voice of disabled people calling for the right to live had been drowned out.

2009

The Autism Act is passed in UK Parliament. It is the first condition specific Act which makes provision for the needs of those who have autism.

2009

These photos show disabled people demanding the right to live.

Timeline Section Five

2010s

Disabled people's activism is more important than ever. As austerity meant huge welfare cuts to vital services, a United Nations (UN) report condemned them as a "human catastrophe" for disabled people.

2010

Disabled People Against the Cuts (DPAC) was formed by a group of disabled people following a mass protest in Birmingham against the austerity cuts and their impact on disabled people.

2012

The Welfare Reform Act is passed this includes an 'under-occupancy penalty' which becomes more widely known as the 'Bedroom Tax'. Disabled people are amongst the worst affected by the new penalty

2013

2013 and 2014 saw a national campaign to prevent the closure of the Independent Living Fund, a fund from central government providing personal assistance support to over 18,000 disabled people.

2015

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) is closed in July 2015. For many people the ILF was a cost effective model of support that gave disabled people choice and control over their own lives.

2017

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) issued a report that condemns the UK Government's record on Disabled People's human rights. The CRPD says it had more concerns about Britain than any other country in its ten-year history.

2017

Human Catastrophe Protest at Conservative Party Conference following the United Nations CRPD Report.

2018

Universal Credit Protest 'Stop and Scrap' Manchester, 2018.

2018

Autistic campaigners protest against a fundraiser for Ambitious about Autism, a charity that supports a therapy called Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA).

It is a therapy based on the science of learning and behaviour. Many in the autistic community see it as 'Autistic conversion therapy.'

Banners

There are four banners suspended from the ceiling of the exhibition. They are:

Not Dead Yet banner

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People banner

Save The Independent Living Fund banner

Disabled People Against the Cuts banner

The information about the banners is as follows:

The Not Dead Yet banner, the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) banner, the Save The Independent Living Fund and the black Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) banner which are all on display were designed by Brian Hilton and hand-sewn by Wadiha, who is a member of GMCDP.

Wadiha initially made a banner in support of the campaign 'Save The Independent Living Fund' after attending a banner making workshop at the People's History Museum and seeing the banners on display here. Following positive feedback on the initial banner, a further three banners were commissioned (as a labour of love rather than for payment), each one being bigger than the last and more complex in design, testing

Wadiha's skills and patience to the max, and leading to Brian's parents also being roped in to cut out some of the letters.

The resulting banners on display now have been used at vigils, marches and social events to promote the work and campaigns of DPAC, GMCDP and Not Dead Yet UK

Photographs and Posters

There is a collection of photographs and posters on the wall. The information about them is as follows:

Nabil Shaban,
“Would this man frighten your
children”

Flyer

1988

Courtesy of GMCDP

Montage of photographs from Nabil
Shaban demonstrations,
1988

Disabled actor, Nabil Shaban, was turned down for a part because of his impairment. In response, GMCDP organised a protest outside Granada Studios.

Courtesy of GMCDP

Protest at Citizens Charter
Conference

1991

Courtesy of GMCDP

‘Pensions for the disabled’ protest.

‘Eccles, Worsley’ group protest at the Houses of Parliament.

Photographs of the marches for
BSL recognition, Nottingham and
London.

2000

Courtesy of Jen Dodds

Federation of Deaf People (FDP)
BSL March poster

2003

Courtesy of Jen Dodds

Recognise BSL now campaign
poster

2003

Courtesy of Jen Dodds

Photographs of Conservative Party
Conference demonstration
Manchester.

2015

Courtesy of GMCDP

Disabled People Against Cuts
Banner at Conservative Party
Conference, Manchester.

2015

Courtesy of GMCDP

Photographs of Conservative Party
Conference protest
2017

Placards by Jo Ann Taylor

There are two placards on display. The information about the placards is as follows:

Reverse your policy cut on wheelchair users on-door widening- to include humans with a severe disability placard and Cant Access Disabled Grant placard.

Made by Jo Ann Taylor

These placards refer to changes in policy which were brought in under the coalition government (2010-2015). This means if you aren't in a wheelchair all the time, occupational therapy (OT) won't recommend modifications to your accommodation. This includes door widening and ramps. Jo Ann is a member of DPAC and has used the placards on many demonstrations.

T-shirt and other Campaign Materials Case

There is case containing a t-shirt and other campaign material. The information about them is as follows:

www.deafpowernow.org t-shirt
Courtesy of Jen Dodds

Federation of Deaf People (FDP)
leaflets and flyers
Early 2000s
Courtesy of Jen Dodds

The Voice, a new magazine for deaf
people poster
1998

Courtesy of Jen Dodds

Leaflets, Badges and Campaign Materials Case

There is a large case of leaflets, badges and other campaign material. The information on the labels in the case is as follows:

Fundamental Principles of
Disability
1976

This booklet published by the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) it has become a foundation for the British Disabled People's Movement and the development of the social model of disability.
Courtesy of GMCDP

A Selection of protest and
campaign badges
Courtesy of Rick Burgess

DPAC campaign leaflets and flyers
Courtesy of Rick Burgess

GMCDP Christmas Cards

Cartoons by Crippen

1998

Dave Lupton, aka Crippen, is Britain's leading Disability cartoonist. His cartoons document the changing social and political attitudes to disability.

Courtesy of GMCDP

'Young Disabled People Do It Too!'

postcards

Produced by Young Disabled People's project

At DIAL House Chester

Cartoons by Angela Martin

A series of five postcards exploring issues around youth, sexuality and disability

Courtesy of GMCDP

Disabled People Bite... The Hand

That Patronises postcard.

The image on this postcard was taken from a short animation video called 'disability is' produced by young disabled people from GMCDP (Young Disabled People's Advise & Resource Centre).

Courtesy of GMCDP

Independence Festival postcards
1997

Designer Brian Hilton
Courtesy of GMCDP

Disabled Lesbian Group postcards
1990s

Postcards by the Disabled Lesbian Group who were part of Manchester's Lesbian Community Project. These postcards use humour to tackle perceptions within the LGBT+ community and show that disabled lesbians have the same desire for a social and romantic life as anyone else.

Courtesy of Ali Briggs

Various promotional materials from Manchester Commonwealth Games, including the Key (Accessible) Route maps.

2002

Manchester has often led the way on access. This is due to the city's history of disabled people's organisations and campaigners. In 2002 Manchester City Council's (disabled) Access Team worked closely with disabled people's organisations. Including Manchester Disabled People's Access Group (MDPAG) to make the Manchester Commonwealth Games the most accessible games ever held.

The Commonwealth Games in Manchester was the first fully inclusive international multi-sport Games, where Para-athletes were fully integrated into their national teams.

Design for Access manual (Design for Access 2)

2003

This manual provides a set of good practice standards to improve the provision of accessible design in new buildings, refurbishments and in the environment. It was produced in 2003 in collaboration with disabled people's organisations, and remains Manchester City Council's approved guidance on inclusive design.

In one case there is William Case's Churchill Fellowship award medal with a photograph. The information about it is as follows:

Activism isn't always about protest. William Case's research helped to influence important new legislation. 'I was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to undertake research around best practise of disability in the US and Canada, investigating the different systems and models. I wanted to bring my research home with the aim of improving the health and social care systems we have in the UK. My research report influenced parts of the Children and Families Act 2014 and is now held in the parliamentary library of the Houses of Commons.'

William Case

Churchill Fellowships, are a unique programme of overseas research grants. These support UK citizens from all parts of society to travel the world in search of innovative solutions for today's most pressing problems.

Churchill Fellowship award medal
Photograph of William Case receiving his
Churchill fellowship.
2011

William was the first person with Cerebral Palsy to receive a Churchill fellowship award. He was presented it by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, another Churchill Fellow and Paralympian.

Courtesy of William Case

Cased T-Shirts

There is a tall case which contains two t-shirts displayed on mannequins. The information about the t-shirts is as follows:

Lorraine Gradwell (1953-2017)

'Was a leading disability rights campaigner with a national profile in Britain. She helped found two organisations in Manchester, both controlled by disabled people, GMCDP in 1985 and Breakthrough UK in 1997 and was involved in BCODP meetings and in DAN demonstrations.

GMCDP – the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

BCODP – the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People
DAN – the Disabled people's Direct Action Network. Lorraine also supported and followed closely the campaigns in the USA for disabled people's rights led by the American group ADAPT, and the work of DPI –the Disabled People's International. She collected a large number of documents from her various campaigns and roles, she also collected 17 T-shirt designs (one a sweatshirt to be precise) from these times.'

Tony Baldwinson

Protest Placards

There are four placards in a tall case. The placards say:

#stopandscrap Universal Credit

Tory cuts kill disabled people

“Human Catastrophe” United Nations re Tory government

Maximus killers for hire

The information about them is as follows:

These placards have been used on numerous protests.

Courtesy of DPAC Manchester.

The Autistic Rights Movement

On the wall there is a group of photographs and labels with information about autism campaigns. The information is as follows:

The Autistic Rights Movement is relatively new and based around autistic people's self advocacy. The Movement believes autism is not a disorder just a different way of functioning. They campaign for greater acceptance of autistic behaviours and challenge those organisations that look to cure autism or use intervention therapies to modify behaviour.

The internet and online forums have been important spaces for the development of the movement. Key groups like Aspies For Freedom started out as online forums.

There are photographs of a chalk protest. The information about them is as follows:

Chalk protest action

Friday, 31 August 2018

'I decided on the first national day of demonstration against ABA to go out on my own and do some chalk drawings outside the library, chalk is a popular material to use at demonstrations, autism pride and outside social gatherings so it seemed like the obvious material to use.

I tried to come up with symbols and slogans that felt right, there are very few autistic demonstrations so chants barely exist so I tried to invent some, some are memes off the internet. Happy hands are flappy hands is a meme against ABA, good manners shouldn't kill is a slogan I came up with because masking is normally seen as good manners but if it does lasting damage to us; a study found suicide highly correlated amongst aspie's with masking. I invented stim dancing is art because an aspie celebrity Agony Autie came up with stim dancing (a combination of stimming and dancing) and to demonstrate its importance and how much it means to us. I decided to create "flashy dressing is snappy dressing" I wanted to put a positive spin on the tendency for comfortable/ stimmy clothing to not be "smart" so I decided to create a slogan around it. It amused me.'

Pete Marshall

First Annual International Day of Protest Against ABA

31 August marks the day the Cardgate scandal broke, when Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) practitioners shared an expansion pack they had created for the popular card game, Cards Against Humanity making fun of autistic people. Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a therapy based on the science of learning and behaviour. Many in the autistic community see it as abusive therapy that seeks to suppress autistic behaviours.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a therapy based on the science of learning and behaviour. Many in the autistic community see it as abusive therapy that seeks to suppress autistic behaviours.

There are photographs of an Autistic Pride Picnic. The information about them is as follows:

Photographs Autistic Pride 2018
Whitworth Park, Manchester.

Autistic Pride Picnic

‘The Autistic Pride Picnic events in Manchester are an opportunity for a minority group to meet other like-minded people in a safe, relaxed and accessible atmosphere. The picnics have decorations, games and toys for all ages, music and speeches and a sticker-based communication system. People can bring food and blankets to share or they can keep themselves. We spend all day at the park and autistic guests and families can come and go at their own pace. Friendships and networks are formed and advice and support is shared, all whilst celebrating our unique culture and neurology.’

Mercy Charpentier

Autistic Pride Manchester organiser

Next to the photographs and information is a television screen playing a video. The information about the video is as follows:

Why Autistic Pride Matters Manchester Autistic Pride
2018

Agony Autie

YouTube video

www.agonyautie.co.uk

Suspended from the ceiling above the autism section is the Autistic Pride Flag. The information about the flag is as follows:

Autistic Pride Flag

‘I have made this flag especially for Autistic Pride events. It tries to incorporate as many different symbols of the autistic rights/neurodiversity movement as possible. In the background, the green stands for being true to your nature, and the purple stands for neurodiversity. The star represents lighting it up gold (gold being seen as representative of autistic people as it's chemical symbol is AU) and the infinity rainbow represents the diversity of the Autistic Community, without the hierarchical implications of the traditional medical model of the autism spectrum.’

Joseph Redford

There is a case of objects including a poster, bunting, badge and a bracelet. The information about them is as follows:

Autism Acceptance

Poster

Many Autistic people don't like the use of the puzzle piece as a symbol for autism as it has many negative associations. The blue puzzle piece is also the logo for the controversial US autism charity Autism Speaks, which advocates harmful treatments and finding a cure for autism.

Autistic Pride Manchester Picnic

Materials

2018

Courtesy of Mercy Charpentier

All in a Row Protest

On the wall are photographs of the All in a Row Protest. The information about them is as follows:

All in a Row protest

February/ March 2019

All in a Row is a new play by Alex Oates which focuses on the parents and carers of a severely disabled autistic 11-year-old child. Laurence the autistic child in the play is controversially portrayed by a puppet. 'We mounted the protest because there was a visible media reaction to a puppet being used to stand in for an autistic child. Right from the start the productions arguments for what they were doing were flimsy and hollow. There are young autistic actors in their 20's who could have been the 11 year old child. They kept saying they had involved autistic adults in the production without ever naming them - and proceeded to do whatever they wanted with the script and puppet. No one has yet identified how any autistic input can be seen in the show. The patronising and dehumanising use of a monkey like puppet (check the reviews for how the thing behaved) together with the issues around representation and the show being basically parent - pity - porn, were ignored by all the shows representatives in their social media statements and interviews. However, they seemed to think they had addressed all issues. It all seemed to me, to be one big attempt to justify themselves and get away with what they were really doing, which was move onto

the next show as actors, writer and directors and continue their careers. It was pleasant to see that in interviews, everyone involved seemed shocked at the response they got. As of my time of writing, the petition against the show is now over 19,000 strong. It's title? THIS PLAY DEHUMANISES AUTISTIC CHILDREN. It clearly focused on the parents as the reality of everything to do with 'autism', and subjugated the only actually autistic character to being a meandering, animal like presence. Lastly, a small number of fanatical groups tried to hijack the plays controversy for their own messages. Bloggers wrote what was supposed to be praise for the show, in order to put their own agenda's across. It was noticeable in any writing that did nothing but praise the show. The numerous professional media/magazine etc reviews you can find online were on a scale of criticism heading down to outright rejection. The protest by 'autistic people' was an important event due to it being mentioned in the mass media the world over. Demonstrating that autistic people who can communicate themselves have opinions and something to say.'

Paul Wady.

There are photos of Guerilla Aspies performing and a reproduction of a book cover. The information about them is as follows:

Guerilla Aspies

‘Well, back in 2015 I published a book called Guerilla Aspies and then started performing a solo show that converts audiences to the 'new normal'. Two years on I started working with my friend Alain English and Annette Cooper to produce a company show that could try to be the voices of real autistic people. Annette had to concentrate on her own work and Alain and I met Sarah Saeed and Hannah Yahya, whom together with the remarkable Janine Booth came to form our first line up. We were joined by Chris Pike and Emma Robdale in the Edinburgh festival this year. We operate from survey responses from autistic people in the closet or late diagnosis and also our own poems and (short) written pieces. It is important that there is no leader, and that everyone has an experience of control and determination in the group. We are slightly unusual for autistic people in that we are all able to concede to each other.’

Paul Wady

www.paulwady.com/the-stealth-aspies-theatre-company

No Excuses

There are photographs of a women's cabaret trip performing and protesting. The information about the photos is as follows:

'No Excuses began our company life in Liverpool in 1989. We were just 3 disabled women, involved in fighting for the right to independence with passion and humor, alongside many other campaigners. We enjoyed chaining ourselves to buses and public buildings, attending rallies and shouting and signing 'Piss on Pity', and 'Rights not Charity'. Yes together, we created mayhem and music and culture and a movement. Our politics informed our work - we rejected the medical model and embraced the then controversial social model of disability. We wrote and performed our sketches around the country at rallies and festivals. After appearing on BBC from the Edge Charity Special with a couple of sketches in 1993, we were commissioned by the BBC in 1994 to write and perform a series of twenty-six sketches, 'The A-Z of Disability'. We had a further commission for a half hour program 'Whose Diary Is It Anyway' in 1995. No Excuses went into hibernation in 1997 as our independent lives took over and the Disability Discrimination Act was unleashed upon us. Now we are back. We believe that the time is ripe for our re-emergence and for us to offer our reflections as we continue our quest for equality.'

No Excuses are a North West based women's cabaret trio which includes Ali Briggs, Mandy Colleran and Mandy Redvers – Rowe

'No excuses' Photographs

Courtesy of Ali Briggs and Mandy Redvers-Rowe

Pure Art Studio - Change The Conversation, Change The Outcome

In this section of the exhibition there two artworks displayed on the wall. The information about them is as follows:

Change The Conversation, Change The Outcome was an exhibition of artwork created by members of Pure Art Studio. The exhibition, hosted by People's History Museum in March 2018 was a celebration of the talents of artists with a learning disability, a group that is often excluded from high profile exhibition opportunities. The exhibition featured artwork created by over fifty Pure Art Studio artists, with creative ownership and direction lead by four members; Melanie Marsden, Nicholaus Msindai, Jason Johnson and Sarah Bradbury who are passionate about achieving equality in the arts.

They had two clear goals for the exhibition; to have their work seen and to speak openly about their experiences as artists with a learning disability, challenging the common perception that their artwork is of a lower standard of that created by other artists. Pure Art Studio enables people to pursue their interest in the arts within an encouraging and supportive collective. Pure Art Studio is part of Pure Innovations, a

charity that promotes independent lifestyles supporting people with a disability and disadvantaged groups.
www.pureinnovations.co.uk

Change The Conversation,
Change The Outcome
by Nicholas Msindai

People
by Nicholas Msindai

One Voice

There are headphones fixed to the wall playing audio.
The information about the audio is as follows:

One Voice - Radio Without Barriers,
Audio Excerpts covering
Perceptions of Disability
Disability and Voting

One Voice is a national award winning radio project produced by people with learning disabilities in Stockport, Greater Manchester. Each show is a mix of music, interviews and specialist features covering trending issues for people with disabilities as well as supporting local charities and organisations. Content is written and recorded by the OneVoice team with the assistance of their support staff, all with experience in audio production. One Voice is broadcast on Your 107.8 fm on Wednesdays at 8pm and is repeated on Saturdays at 7am. One Voice is part of Pure Innovations, a charity that promotes independent lifestyles supporting people with a disability and disadvantaged groups.
www.pureinnovations.co.uk

Quiet Riot

In this section of the exhibition there is one introduction panel and nine panels each one including a photo, biography and piece of writing. The text on the panels is as follows:

Introduction Panel

“The silence of speechlessness is never golden. We all need to communicate and connect with each other—not just in one way, but in as many ways as possible. It is a basic human need, a basic human right. And more than this, it is a basic human power”

Bob Williams 2000

Collab Poem - Communication

Can't wait to tell you what I think

Obstacles to overcome

Mention my abilities

Muttering my beliefs

United together with one goal

Negative thoughts wash over me

Inclusion is my goal

Conclusion.

Adage to compare.

Tolerate the ignorance

Inspiration I am not

Overcome my challenges

Never apologise.

Quiet Riot is not a self-help or support group in the usual sense, but they do hold common cause and give and receive support. Quiet Riot is a collective of disabled young people and their allies.

- A desire to be heard
- A love of language
- A longing for connection
- At times, a frustration with a world that is too quick and too loud
- Having a lot to say, but not always with the space to say

Panel One

Anthony

Please teacher

I want my publishing you promised

Let me publish my poetry
in my way

I've got people to help me

Usually help comes
from teachers but not you.

I need to help myself

Go home by myself
Being by myself is good
I like being on my own.

Have no worries
Have no problems
Have no grief
Have no teachers

Possible no family
Have no more friends
Just me on my own
Just how am I going to help myself?

Pity me if I try to help myself
Please help me to learn to help myself
Listen to me
Please help me.

Anthony was born in Dublin, Ireland in 1988 and has virtually no speech. It was not until 1998 when Anthony was privately assessed by a Professor in Dublin that he was diagnosed as having Autism. Prior to this, he had been educated as 'mentally handicapped' since the team of experts at both special schools he attended in Dublin failed to make this diagnosis. Anthony now lives in his own accommodation in Dublin. He believes 'independent living is great, much better than institutions

Panel Two

Blake

Words

My team and I wrote this after a particularly difficult occasion where we were all judged negatively and found wanting. This person made the mistake of writing an email to us showing us the error of our ways and giving us the benefit of her knowledge on these perceptions.

‘Even when there has been a lifetime of effort put into an existence and we are surrounded by like-minded family, friends and colleagues, just one disability phobic act can wobble those hard fought for foundations.’

‘The impact of such offensive behaviour is far reaching and is insidious. It creeps into the belief structures and makes you defensive and defenceless.’

‘Trying to find good out of bad, which incidentally is something disabled people do regularly because of this disabling world, has been difficult this time as it felt such a personal attack.’

‘As a team we are self-reflectors and part of our work culture is to share, reflect and discuss all aspects of the role, both as IEs and as PAs. We have decided that we must not let this incident change our common ethos.’

‘Blake is an IE, our boss and a quite nice guy, who we all admire and respect’.

‘We are dedicated professional yet human PAs who look after each other as well as Blake, and if he is happy with our work we will not be undermined to make change’.

We all accept this is still a world made by non-disabled people for non-disabled people but we are committed to challenge this for a more just society which celebrates all people and their gifts.

Hi, I’m Blake - I’m an Individual Employer and Disability Equality Trainer. I spend a lot of time making visible the lived experience of disability and impairment. I use the learning from my degree and MA to try and encourage all to see the value of disabled people. Quiet Riot is a fabulous platform for this, for those of us who use alternative communication.

Panel Three

Danian

Peaceful?

I am unable to pronounce
What thoughts are in my mind
What people pronounce
Does not show how clever they are.
Writing allows people to say
Exactly what they want.
Past appearances of the disabled are wrong.
People make assumptions
When I am facilitated I am able
To let others know how I feel
This is undoubtedly beneficial to my peace
Will you love me?
Til I opportunely lead a peaceful life.

Danian was born in Manchester, 1984. He completed his first B.A module 2005. Growing up his passions included reading and horse riding with a firm goal of educating others “that with proper teachers, kids with disabilities can learn to be literate.” Danian died on the morning of 14th November 2005, aged 21

Panel Four

Heathar

Darkness

Sitting in the darkness waiting for light
Emotional silence but a mind so bright
Bring me the chance and bring the joy
to say those 3 words to my special boy

Body like a prison no control of the tongue
Looking for the opportunity to sing you my song

The only way out is with your help and support
Forever I am grateful and never retort.

I am Heathar Ashley Barrett and I am 32 years old. I have endured the delights of 'special' education and so called inclusion within mainstream. However where I felt valued and understood was University.

I enjoy being creative and writing poems and creating video poems to share online

I see Quiet Riot as a movement of empowering people silenced by society. We are here to allow people to hear us, listen to our words and appreciate us as intelligent human beings.

Panel Five

Judathan

Fingers

Fingers bring my world alive,
They tell more tiptop tales,
They hurt you when they point,
They free ill feelings typed,

I'm dying to unfury louder,
Noise escaping from my throat there's
A dummy hiccup urge holds
My xanthous jaw firm.

Judathan Allen was born in Manchester, 1977. He completed almost half the modules of a B.A degree. His description of himself "I am a poet, I love life, I have God on my side. Love conquers all. I love long country walks and feeling the sun on my face."

Judathan died on the morning of 22nd May 2017, aged 40 years.

Panel Six

Paul-Thomas Allen

The Pub

A haven there is, young at heart,
That trades in spirits high and low,
Heroic tales, deeds swarm the ear
Youth and health they come and go.

Leaf kind geezers joust lyrical
All hungry for the headline bout
Teachers of festering truth flood
Sponge to end dry doubt.

Golden casked blondes herald the
Definitive bronzed glow,
Heavily bodied brunettes plough
Faithfully through life's snow.

Time is called, unfair exit cold,
Upon the Church Inn yard I shalt,
Raise a glass for the funeral chimes,
My fallen brethren and souls devout.

My name is Paul-Thomas Allen. I type to communicate my thoughts. I had been so dumb for so long. 25 years with no voice. Too bad the world saw me as dumb of mouth and mind, but not my family. Since my rebirth I have begun to accomplish. Through no mean effort I have come this far. I enjoy educating the world to understanding the reality of difference, the first principle of love.

Panel Seven

Raphael

My thoughts
My thoughts are joyous I think
Upon everyday sun shines to jump
Playing like little lights on crumpled water
The ideas lark
Like ribbons floating in a breeze
Free to dive and rise again
The ripple of life is in my head.

Time you have
I am thinking of wasted time that is precious.
Time you have
to make your tired year
find the full hope
we witter away our lives
we try to delight in mediocrity
that we envision the
way of loving.
it is a gift.
Let us not waste.

My name is Raphael Allen
I would like to say I am a man with no speech. I am a
user of the pointing method of communication. I listen
well and understand what is said. People think letting
disabled go to death is ok but I would like to show we
humans are alike and welcome. Fear and I go hand in
hand.

Panel Eight

Thiandi

The Present last too long
In every moment hides the Past
I want to go forward
In the living of my life
Tomorrow is far away
A dream I'm craving
How many times will it pass?
I want to hold it!
Freedom is fleeting
embracing her is essential
fiercely, before she flies

Black clouds in the Alps
Black clouds of grime
steal the light from life
on our earth
Factories vomit their filth
Stoves spew their soot.
Why does nobody act?
Car's roar on speedy roads
in dusty twilight in the middle of the day.
Above the sunlit Alps
soot clouds sway amidst the mountaintops
Is this our future?
A rusty rug in the clouds
that hinders the sun to comfort us
and makes life so bleak?

My name is Thiandi Grooff and I'm 26 years old. Since a couple of years I live in my own house in Amsterdam. In 2014 I graduated from Amsterdam University College (AUC) in social sciences. Until here nothing strange, but my life is quite exceptional. I communicate by typing on a voice machine like Stephen Hawking. I know how it feels when institutions and rules become an obstacle instead of helping you. For instance being not admitted at school because of my handicaps. This is why I like to write about this nice topic.

Panel Nine

Maresa

What Future?

This poem is based on somebody I know who, at present, is being threatened with most of the money for his assistance being taken away.

My friend has people around him to assist

He thinks and he writes.

They attend places of learning

the pleasure of the park

they get his thoughts down on paper

together.

The world is better off for his thinking.

Future plans tell him that soon

no-one will be there.

He will sit alone, frightened

as there is no-one there.

He can't go to study

he can't tell the world his thoughts

as there is no-one there.

We are poorer without his thinking

There are many different ways of taking life away

We can extinguish breath or

forcibly disconnect.

So, no more conversations

no more walks in the park.

There are many different ways of taking life away

his life - well - so what?

He is just too expensive after all.

Maresa Mackeith is a writer, educator and observer of the world. She expresses herself non-verbally, through an alternative method of communication. She is the author of *Taking The Time* (2011, Inclusive Solutions) and *I Can Still See The Sky* (2019, Big White Shed) Her work features in an anthology of writing, *Quiet Riot Collected*. (2016, Inclusive Solutions). She hopes her poems 'challenge, comfort and give hope'.

Music

There is an ipad playing audio with headphones attached. The information about the audio is as follows:

Music has always been a powerful way to get your message across. Disabled people have often used music in protest and celebration. The Nothing About Us Without us playlist highlights some of these artists.

Display has Photographs of
Brian Hilton, Leigh Sterling & Mat Frazer
Courtesy of GMCDP

Dennis Queen
Courtesy of GMCDP

The Tokens
Courtesy of GMCDP

Ian Stanton
Courtesy of GMCDP

Johnnie Crescendo
Courtesy of GMCDP

Leigh Sterling
Courtesy of GMCDP

Nothing About Us Without Us Playlist

A selection of songs and poetry

- 01 Ian Stanton - Talkin' Disabled Anarchist Blues.
- 02 Leigh Sterling - Tear The Doors
- 03 Johnny Crescendo - Ballad Of Josie Evans
- 04 Dennis Queen - Time For Action
- 05 The Tokens - Rowdy Proud
- 06 Sue Napolitano - On Being Special
- 07 Ian Stanton - Poor Dear
- 08 The Tokens - Plastic Spastic
- 09 Sue Napolitano - Christmas Party
- 10 Leigh Sterling - Twist Of Fate
- 11 Brian Hilton - Poster Child (Acoustic)
- 12 Sue Napolitano - For Our Warriors
- 13 Dennis Queen - Let Us Live
- 14 Johnny Crescendo - Dance To A Different Drum

Interviews

There is a TV screen with headphones playing a series of filmed interviews with disabled activists. These films are subtitled. The transcripts for these interviews are in separate documents located beside the TV screen.

The activists interviewed are:

Andy Walker

Jackie Driver

Jen Dodds

No Excuses Ali Briggs and Mandy Redvers – Rowe

Pam Thomas