



RCS

ADVANCING SURGICAL STANDARDS

MUSEUMS AND ARCHIVES

Hunterian Museum Philosophy of Display

The Hunterian Museum houses a renowned collection of human remains gathered by John Hunter 250 years ago and by generations of anatomists since.

The Royal College of Surgeons of England provides free access so that we may all learn about the history of surgery. Part of this fascinating story is the way anatomists gathered human remains – very differently to the ways medical museums collect today.

These remains, together with many thousands more in our research collections, continue to reveal biomedical secrets about health and disease. We want to use them to record rare conditions and to help patients today.

But human remains are much more than scientific data: these fascinating objects were once people. Some visitors may therefore find them unnerving, even distressing, especially those that were very young, or lived with disease and difference. We know who some of them were, but not all: where we have information, it is available on our online database (<http://surgicat.rcseng.ac.uk>).

Because of the sensitivity of what is on display here we ask that you refrain from photography or filming. Where appropriate, images can be downloaded from the database.

It is with enormous respect for the dead that the Royal College of Surgeons of England maintains this collection to provide clinical and educational benefit for the living.

Dr Sam Alberti
Director of Museums and Archives
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