

“Any Old Iron?” - The Welsh Museum of Health and Medicine

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The majority of the artefacts held in the Museum collection are donated from general practice and from regional hospitals. During the past year or so, however, we have received donations from industry. The closure of the 'heavy end' of the Spencer Steelworks, Llanwern caused the closure of the substantial Medical Centre at that end of the Works that had been charged with dealing with the health of employees exposed to industrial pollution as well as the trauma associated with such a potentially dangerous manufacturing process.

We have also received items from the collection of the NHS Wales Store housed in a disused aircraft hangar at MOD St Athan, shedding light on hospital and school health practice in the 1950s. This has turned up some fascinating items but none are supported by narrative.

After a telephone call from the managing Director of a nationally renowned brewery, we received a fascinating collection of memorabilia about the life of one consultant surgeon.

We continue to receive donations from Professor Terry Turner as he redistributes items from his substantial publicly displayed collections.

The WMHM collection is not currently on public display. It is stored in a secure facility at the University Hospital of Wales site and is best viewed by studying the WMHM website <www.wmhm.org.uk>. As with any museum, the collection only comes to life when individual items are supported by historic information - anything from manufacturing detail to anecdotes about memories of its usage in the Welsh Health Service. If you have worked in the Health Service in Wales and can provide any such supportive narrative, we would be delighted to hear from you through the website, by telephone or by mail.

Presented at the HOMSW meeting, Newcastle Emlyn, September 26th, 2014.

The Welsh Museum of Health and Medicine Trust is registered with the Charity Commission: #1067160.

www.homsw.org.uk