

## **The Heritage of Chailey**

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In 1903 the Heritage Craft School for Cripples was founded at Chailey by Grace Kimmins. The first pupils were taken from 'The Guild of the Brave Poor Things'.

Chailey Heritage was a residential school with hospital treatment and became known as 'The Public School of Crippledom'. Alongside treatment of contemporary diseases such as polio, TB and congenital malformations, children had rigorous exercise programmes and were taught crafts such as leatherwork, printing and woodwork.

Between the wars, New Heritage was added and Chailey became a major educational and treatment centre. The medical and surgical care was given by local doctors and visiting consultants from London and Brighton, with operations on site or in those cities.

As infectious disease was gradually brought under control the need for New Heritage declined. It closed in 1998 and was relocated as The New Clinical Area on the Old Heritage site.

Around 2000, the author was shown 174 patient files, dating from 1941-1983, which were being considered for destruction. Along with radiographs, many files contained photographs of the children and other information about their care.

Over the next several years, during clinics and with local help, the author examined all the files, discarded superfluous images and grouped the conditions into infections, tumours, neuromuscular conditions, congenital malformations, syndromes, and unclassified. Of particular interest were florid cases of TB, skeletal dysplasias and records of many of the British Thalidomide children.

Following much discussion, it is planned for the files to be digitised and preserved electronically.

*Presented to the HOMSW Meeting, Aberystwyth, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2014*

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