

## 'Surgery, collections and the Great War'

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Precisely a century ago, not long after the outbreak of the First World War, pathologists and senior military clinicians set out to record and collect information relating to conflict-related conditions and wounds. This material included not only statistics, case histories and clinical illustrations, but also models and human remains. This paper outlines the largest British concentration of such images and specimens, in the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons of England. These included the stunning pastel portraits by surgeon-turned-artist Henry Tonks of patients at Harold Gillies' plastic surgery unit at Aldershot/Sidcup. Pathological preparations also arrived from the front and elsewhere to be preserved and exhibited—word, image and object juxtaposed—with the intention of training the Army Medical Services. The work that went into the collection and the post-war debates about the ownership of these specimens and pictures demonstrate the value medical museums in the early twentieth century; the re-display of the complete series of Tonks' pastels this year (for the first time in a generation) reminds us of their enduring appeal.

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