

## Psychiatry in pictures

EDITED BY ALLAN BEVERIDGE

Do you have an image, preferably accompanied by 100 to 200 words of explanatory text, that you think would be suitable for Psychiatry in Pictures? Submissions are very welcome and should be sent direct to Dr Allan Beveridge, Queen Margaret Hospital, Whitefield Road, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 0SU, UK.



Louis Wain (1860–1939). *A Cat in Wonderment* (top); *Watching You* (bottom). Text by Dr Alexandra Pitman.

Louis Wain, who was featured in the December 2001 edition of this column, was a household name during the Edwardian period. His anthropomorphised cats set in highly-coloured landscapes featured regularly in the *Illustrated London News* and in popular books for adults and children. Frank Burnand, an editor of *Punch*, was struck by his 'intense sadness' and Wain's biography describes a solitary child prone to fantasy. In adulthood he developed delusions that spirits were projecting electricity into him and in 1924 was certified insane and admitted to Springfield Hospital. Subsequently he was transferred to the Bethlem, whose collection contains many of his works, and his final years were spent at Napsbury. A psychiatric nurse at Napsbury recalled that in 1933 Wain lost interest in cats and began creating 'wallpaper designs' – psychedelic, geometric patterns of which the kaleidoscopic background in this first picture is an example. This lasted until 1935 when, under pressure from his sisters to produce more commercial work with which to support them, he returned to drawing cats in his usual style. Wain's work, including those of this more experimental period, are still widely collected today.

With thanks to Chris Beetles Gallery, 8–10 Ryder Street, London SW1.

