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Instructing the Young and Comforting the Aged in the Norwich and Norfolk Institution for the Indigent Blind, *ca.* 1805–55

Susannah Ottaway with Adam Smart and Michael Schultz

Abstract This article considers the ways that Enlightenment ideas and practices shaped the founding of the Norwich and Norfolk Institution for the Indigent Blind, and then analyzes the disparate approaches to the aged versus the working-age blind in its first half-century (*ca.* 1805–55). While we see change over time, we also find distinctive continuity in the ongoing close connections inmates kept with Norwich civic life and family and friends; this was emphatically not a closed asylum. The institution demonstrated consistent commitment to helping its pupils towards self-sufficiency, with optimism about what the blind could (literally) turn their hands to. Nonetheless, the Norwich Institution was disciplinary, actively seeking to produce docile, productive bodies among its blind pupils, both through education and through work habits. Time, labor, and moral discipline increased for pupils over the course of its first half-century, and girls and women were pushed into less economically rewarding work practices. Equally important, while it had an unwavering, humanitarian commitment to providing for the aged blind, its insistent characterization of these inmates as helpless and pitiable limited the potential of the institution to facilitate the well-being of its older residents.

James Vale was admitted to the Norwich and Norfolk Institution for the Indigent Blind at the age of thirteen in 1811. One of the principal goals of the institution was to train poor, visually impaired young people to master handicraft

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skills within three years, and Vale became sufficiently accomplished at basket- and mat-making to earn 5s. a week, but this was far from the end of his involvement with the institution. In 1814, when James sickened with a "long and tedious illness," he was carefully nursed back to health. In return, "as a grateful acknowledgement for the care and attention shewn to his son," James's working-class father surprised the institution with a donation of ten pounds. The institution's governing committee was so proud of "this extraordinary mark of gratitude in a poor Labouring Man," that they recorded the donation as one of the hallmark events in the history of the institution on the flyleaf of their committee book. Like many of his peers, Vale continued to live and work at the institution long after his three-year training period, despite being asked to leave in 1824 to make room for other pupils. In 1833, the governing committee supplied five pounds for him to visit his family in Birmingham, but Vale did not permanently change residency until 1838, when he asked to be dismissed from the residential wing in order to take advantage of the institution's new policy of allowing "journeymen" to use the institution as a sheltered workshop. This was one of a suite of innovations introduced in the late 1830s and 1840s to address changing ideas about blind education, new financial imperatives, and persistent expressions of the residents' preference for freedom of movement. James Vale's story speaks to the Norwich Institution's flexible approach to vocational education for visually impaired youth and highlights the active role of these pupils in determining their experience. Vale's case also reflects a striking continuity in the institution's character: the reciprocal attachments maintained between the institution and its residents to communities outside its gates. This was emphatically not a closed asylum.[1]

The Norwich and Norfolk Institution for the Indigent Blind began pursuing its mission to support "those most unquestionable objects of pity, the BLIND" in its "Hospital for the Aged and … School of Instruction for young indigent Blind Persons in this County and City" on 4 September 1805.[2] The charity survives to this day, and is now known as Vision Norfolk. It has drawn little attention from historians, who have missed the opportunity to explore both its characteristic mix of humanitarian and utilitarian motives and actions, and its unique approach to supporting the aged and educating its pupils who, far from being mere "objects of pity," actively sought and molded the resources offered by the institution.

Examining the ideas and practices that shaped the founding of the institution in its first half-century, and analyzing its disparate approaches to those with visual impairments in old age versus those of working age deepens our understanding of the social and cultural history of disabilities during a "crucial historical period" for the history of visual impairment in Europe.[3] Distinctions between the age categories were reflected in terminology: "pupils" was the term most often used for children and

[1] "An Account of Work Done by the Pupils from 1 January 1816 to [sic]," Norfolk Record Office (hereafter NRO) SO 159/33; Visitors' Book, 21 September 1814, NRO SO 159/28; Annual General Meeting and Committee Minutes, 26 January 1824 and 6 May 1833, NRO SO 159/2. Vale's application to be a journeyman is found in Committee Minute Book, NRO SO 159/3, 1836–57.

[2] "Institution for the Blind," *Norfolk Chronicle*, 4 May 1805; reprinted in "An Account of the Establishment of an Hospital and School for the Indigent Blind of Norfolk and Norwich" (Norwich, 1805–06), NRO ACC 2004/78.

[3] Zina Weygand, *The Blind in French Society: From the Middle Ages to the Century of Louis Braille*, trans. Emily-Jane Cohen (Stanford, 2009), 8.

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adults under age fifty-five who received work instruction. Older residents were referred to collectively as "aged persons" or "aged inmates" in institutional records. We adopt these terms throughout this article and refer collectively to those living in the institution as residents. The institution's approach to its pupils was dynamic over the course of the half-century analyzed here. Initial experimentation with profitable, market-oriented work for girls and young women gave way to a focus on gendered, domestic skills training. The 1830s and 1840s brought increased attention to literacy and music training for all pupils, and new work opportunities for boys and men. In contrast, the institution's humanitarian commitment to providing basic care for the aged was static, and the institution's insistent characterization of these inmates as helpless and pitiable limited the potential of the institution to facilitate the well-being of its older residents.[4]

As William Paulson notes, blindness is "a cultural category constituted by those who write and speak of it. It means very different things, and moreover it *is* very different things, at different times, different places, and in different kinds of writing."[5] This article similarly requires that we acknowledge the complexity of blindness as a category. People who applied for admission to the Norwich Institution exhibited a range of visual impairment, whether congenital or brought on by age, disease, or accident. Medical certification of vision loss was required, and when it was over-full, the institution prioritized those with total blindness, denying entry or work to those with some sight. [6] Still, it faced persistent applications from people with a wide range of sensory impairments, and continued to admit those with some visual ability; a few pupils subsequently had their blindness cured by medical intervention.[7] The institution constantly navigated the question of what kind of visual impairment would qualify one as "blind."

Arising from Enlightenment fascination with vision, new attitudes towards work for the disabled, and the pervasive, late eighteenth-century philanthropic impulse to create specialized institutions, Britain's "first wave" of institutions for the blind were established between 1791 and 1815. They have been studied to understand the motivations and policies of their creators and administrators, their degree of economic or educational success, and their effects on the agency and integration of the visually impaired people who lived and/or worked within them.[8] While historians generally

[4] We will generally use the term "visually impaired" rather than blind, except where the archival or historical literature refers specifically to blindness. On the historically negative valence of the term "blind," see Weygand, *The Blind in French Society*, 2.

[5] W. Paulson, *Enlightenment, Romanticism and the Blind in France* (Princeton, NJ, 1987), 3–4, see also 199–201.

[6] Committee Minutes, 10 June 1807, NRO SO 159/1. Fully visually impaired applicants were prioritized in 1833, 1839, and 1846: NRO SO 159/2–3.

[7] Committee Minutes, e.g., medical cure 6 April 1812; example of many dismissals for too much sight, 7 December 1829, NRO SO 159/1–2.

[8] S. Lloyd, *Charity and Poverty in England c. 1680–1820: Wild and Visionary Schemes* (Manchester, 2009); Michael W. Royden, *Pioneers and Perseverance. A History of the Royal School for the Blind, Liverpool 1791–1991, A Bicentennial Celebration* (Birkenhead, 1991); G. Phillips, "Scottish and English Institutions for the Blind, 1792–1860," *The Scottish Historical Review* 74, no. 198(2) (October 1995): 178–209; G. Phillips, *The Blind in British Society: Charity, State and Community, c. 1780–1930* (Aldershot, 2004), 19; John Oliphant, "Empowerment and Debilitation in the Educational Experience of the Blind in Nineteenth-century England and Scotland," *History of Education* 35, no. 1 (2006): 47–68; Amanda Bergen, "A Philosophical Experiment: The Wilberforce Memorial School for the Blind, c. 1833–1870," *European Review of History* 14, no. 2 (2007): 147–64.

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agree that these institutions primarily targeted work training for the working class, they diverge in their assessment of their enlightened or humanitarian (as opposed to medical or utilitarian) nature, both in motivation and impact. For institutions in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, York, and London, Gordon Phillips emphasizes the mix of humanitarian and utilitarian motives of their founders and suggests that despite "tensions and resentments" between those who regulated institutional life and inmates who sought "to improve their conditions, especially at the workplace," the asylum regime was not repressive.[9] Chris Mounsey, in contrast, finds that these institutions marked "a victory for charity over the needs and desires of blind people."[10] Studies of blind education in the mid-nineteenth century also diverge. While John Oliphant paints a broadly negative picture, Amanda Bergen's case study of the Wilberforce Memorial School for the Blind in York uncovers the "relatively enlightened regime" of the school and notes its "warm and caring environment."[11] In our view, the Norwich Institution's accommodating and flexible approach to vocational, disciplinary training for pupils resonates well with Phillips' and Bergen's studies. At the same time, its use by the aged sets it apart, and we are attentive to Mounsey's reminder that charities such as these imposed philanthropists' goals onto residents in ways that denied their full agency. The Norwich Institution enforced time, social, and labor discipline on its residents.

Looking at how work shaped expectations and experiences is a particularly important arena for disability studies.[12] As David Turner has explained, "we know very little about the work experiences of people with impairments in the past." Both the ability to work and "exclusion from certain economic activities" were important factors "in the ways in which people with various impairments defined themselves in this period."[13] John Rule notes that in this period, skill "represented a symbolic capital, an 'honour' the possession of which entitled its holder to dignity and respect."[14] This study shows that pupils—but not aged inmates—with visual impairment could leverage this capital to maintain agency within an institution that prided itself on teaching work skills.

Our analysis speaks not only to the record of this institution for the blind, but also more broadly to the historiography of disability and philanthropy. Early institutions for people with disabilities are often associated with the rise of the medical model of disability and with increased stigmatization. Christopher Gabbard and Susannah Mintz point out that the increase in hospital medicine and asylums led to isolation,

[9] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 110.

[10] Chris Mounsey, "Edward Rushton, the First British Blind School, and Charitable Work for the Blind in Eighteenth-Century England," *La Questione Romantica Special Issue: Edward Rushton's Bicentenary* n.s., 7, no. 1–2 (2015): 85–101, at 100.

[11] Bergen, "A Philosophical Experiment," 159–160; compare with Oliphant, "Empowerment and Debilitation," 57, 68.

[12] Daniel Blackie, "Disability and Work during the Industrial Revolution in Britain," in *The Oxford Handbook of Disability History*, ed. Michael Rembis, Catherine Kudlick, and Kim E. Nielsen (Oxford, 2018), 177–96.

[13] David Turner, *Disability in Eighteenth-Century England: Imagining Physical Impairment* (New York, 2012), 10.

[14] John Rule, "The Property of Skill in the Period of Manufacture," in *The Historical Meanings of Work*, ed. Patrick Joyce (Cambridge, 1987), 108.

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explaining: "Institutional approaches over-medicalized what was, in large measure, a social, educational and economic problem."[15] Phillips demonstrates that despite some marginalizing, negative aspects, early institutions for the blind generally did engage with people's visual impairments in the context of broader social, educational, and economic problems.[16] Analyzing the Norwich Institution within its social and cultural context allows us to focus more intensely on the ways in which that context produced expectations of people with sensory impairment that varied according to age and gender.[17] Influenced by Mounsey's work, and the "Nothing about us, without us" movement that compels us to center the everyday life and systemic oppression of people with disabilities, we seek to understand the Norwich Institution from the perspective of its residents as well as its founders. We nevertheless acknowledge the limitations of our sources, which are almost exclusively written by sighted administrators and observers, as well as our own perspective as people without significant sensory impairment.[18]

This study engages with these historiographic discussions using a wealth of surviving sources: governing committee minutes, work and visitors' books, annual reports, printed pamphlets, and newspaper coverage.[19] We look first at how the institution's policies were shaped in its early years, and then explain key elements of change and continuity that marked its mature form by 1850.

There is ample room for our study, as the Norwich Institution has been neglected by historians and even mischaracterized as "obscure."[20] Though founded and funded by a group of Norwich philanthropists, the institution had national reach. Its founders participated in a network of correspondents with common intellectual and economic interests and close ties to other institutions for the blind in Britain and beyond. A large donation in May 1808 allowed admission to be "thrown open to the kingdom at large."[21] Because many of its pupils depended on parish poor relief, the institution was also connected to numerous parish officers.[22] Networks of sociability, shared philanthropic mission, and local political and religious authority

[15] D. C. Gabbard and S. B. Mintz, "Introduction," in *A Cultural History of Disability in the Long Eighteenth Century*, ed. D. C. Gabbard and S. B. Mintz (London, 2020), 1–18, at 14; Anne Borsay, *Disability and Social Policy in England: A History of Exclusion since 1750* (Houndmills, 2005).

[16] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*.

[17] Esme Cleall, "'Deaf to the Word': Gender, Deafness and Protestantism in Nineteenth- Century Britain and Ireland," *Gender & History* 25, no. 3 (November 2013): 590–603.

[18] James I. Charlton, *Nothing About Us Without Us: Disability, Oppression and Empowerment*, 1st ed. (Berkeley, 1998); Pieter Verstraete, *In the Shadow of Disability: Reconnecting History, Identity and Politics* (Opladen, 2012).

[19] "An Account of Work Done by the Pupils from 1 January 1816 to [sic]," NRO SO 159/33; Minutes of the Committee of the Hospital and School for the Indigent Blind in Norfolk & Norwich and of the General Meetings of the Subscribers, NRO SO 159/1–3; Visitors' Book, NRO SO 159/28; List of Subscriptions and Benefactions, 1807–1814, NRO SO 159/31, 727x6; 1807–1811, NRO SO 159/32, 727x6, and several boxes of uncatalogued material, NRO Acc 2004/78.

[20] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 61. Norwich was relatively small; London, Liverpool, and Edinburgh had 80–122 pupils, while Norwich had about 40 residents in 1836–37. Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 19, 62.

[21] Committee Minutes, 17 May 1808, NRO SO 159/1.

[22] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1–3: the weekly fee charged to parishes for a parishioner's maintenance in the institution was 2s. per week in 1805, 3s. in 1833, and 4s by the 1840s.

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both knit the Norwich Institution into the fabric of Norwich city life and connected it to far-flung philanthropists and educators.[23]

FOUNDING AND MISSION

Scholars regard the first British institutions for those with sensory impairment as less focused on high-minded philosophical or pedagogical goals than those of the French, which were strongly connected to the Enlightenment.[24] However, we see a clear link between the Enlightenment obsession with blindness and British interest in improving the condition of those with visual impairments. In the British context, teaching disabled people to work fit into Enlightened notions of utility, economic individualism, and self-improvement as well as Enlightened fascination with, specifically, the dexterity of the blind.[25] Enlightenment *practices* also underpinned the foundations of British institutions for the blind, especially the social practice of meeting in clubs and societies, which was central to eighteenth-century culture and galvanized charitable initiatives.[26]

Phillips comments that the success of British institutions for the blind rested on their being "local organisations embedded in their own communities."[27] In the case of Norwich, we can draw a tight connection between the Enlightenment and the founding of the Norwich Institution because several early leaders were members of the town's most important literary/philosophical club: the Society of United Friars.[28] Although engaging in philosophical and scientific debates and celebrating conviviality (an address by their "Abbott" in 1807 reminded "Junior Brethren" that the society was formed "to unite Recreation with mental Improvement; for it is our Object to mix Hilarity with the pursuits of Taste, Science & moral Utility"), the United Friars are most notable for their sustained efforts in philanthropy and mutual support.[29] Their Jacobin sympathies and eclectic, but primarily Dissenting, religious orientation were similar to the characteristics of the Roscoe Circle in Liverpool, which had nurtured the idea of the Liverpool institution for the blind.[30]

The United Friars were at the heart of their city's life, shaping the "social milieu" that determined the character of the Norwich Institution.[31] Arianne Chernock

[23] For visitors and correspondence from France and Germany, see Committee Minutes, 13 December 1813, page inserted after 14 August 1815, NRO SO 159/1.

[24] Paulson, *Enlightenment*, 38; Weygand, *The Blind in French Society.*

[25] Kate Tunstall, *Blindness and Enlightenment: An Essay. With a New Translation of Diderot's 'Letter on the Blind' and La Mothe Le Vayer's 'Of a Man Born Blind'* (New York, 2011), esp. 178. Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 38–39.

[26] Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies c.1580–1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000).

[27] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 62.

[28] United Friars who had leading roles in the Norwich Institution included the publishers Stevenson, Matchett and Stevenson, the Gurney brothers from Norwich's leading banking family, and the long-serving town clerk Elisha de Hague. Bursar's Book of United Society of Friars, NRO COL 9/15. See Index of Members, Subjects, Etc., NRO COL 9/5.

[29] Lists of Rules, United Society of Friars, NRO CO 9/23; Transactions of the Society, 1804–1817, NRO COL 9/3.

[30] Mounsey, "Edward Rushton," 94.

[31] Compare with Phillips, "Scottish and English Institutions," 200: "the social milieu shaped … these [Scottish] charities' distinctive character."

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accurately notes their humanitarian, feminist, and abolitionist efforts, while others helpfully assess their contributions to artistic, literary, and scientific culture.[32] The United Friars piloted several subscription charities in the early 1790s: their soup charity—one of the first in the country—was an effective test kitchen for setting up and running the Norwich Institution.[33] Both pragmatic and philosophical in its approach to poverty, the society held debates about social inequalities and how to redress them, and collected detailed analyses of the state of the poor in England.[34]

Like many intellectuals in this "ocular age," the United Friars demonstrated a keen interest in vision, blindness, and perception.[35] They owned, read, and discussed Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the wellspring of the Enlightenment's obsessive interest in "Molyneux's Question," which set questions of vision loss at the heart of debates about sensation and empiricist epistemology.[36] On 1 April 1790, their discussion centered on the "Observations on Blindness & on the Employment of the other Senses to Supply the Loss of Sight, by Wm Bew."[37] The early literature promoting the Norwich Institution for the Blind reflected both Bew's optimism that the sensation of touch could compensate for vision loss, and his assumption that those who could not see were piteous and naturally prone to depression. The United Friars brought their robust social connections, publicity and printing resources, philanthropic networks, and expertise to the institution's first years, but their commitment to its cause grew out of the intellectual and humanitarian pursuits of their Enlightened society. Although founded at a time most would consider post-Enlightenment, the Norwich Institution was clearly the offspring of Enlightenment ideas and practices.

The Norwich Institution also fit well with the broader culture of philanthropy in early–mid nineteenth-century Norwich, with its historical connection to innovation in eye surgery and burgeoning medical charities, including an eye infirmary that

[32] Arianne Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism* (Stanford, 2010), 23, 72, 96, 182, n. 63. William Stevenson was proprietor of the *Norfolk Chronicle* from 1785. Paul Elliott, "Towards a Geography of English Scientific Culture: Provincial Identity and Literary and Philosophical Culture in the English County Town, 1750–1850," *Urban History* 32, no. 3 (2005): 391–412; Angela Dain, "An Enlightened and Polite Society," in *Norwich since 1550: A Fine City*, ed. Carole Rawcliffe and Richard Wilson with Christine Clark (London, 2004), 193–218.

[33] Tickets, notes, and sources related to the United Friars' Soup Charity, NRO COL 9/26/1–13; "Subscribers' Names ETC. to Soup Charity," NRO COL 9/21; and "Index of Members," NRO COL 9/5, showed numerous overlaps with the "Subscribers Book of the Blind Institution," NRO SO 159/31, 727x6 and NRO SO 159/32, 727x6.

[34] "United Friars Proceedings on Subjects Proposed," 1791, December 1792, January 1793, NRO COL 9/7; "Index of Members, Subjects, Etc. The Friars' Society," NRO COL 9/5.

[35] Discussion "on Vision" on 4 May 1790, p. 83, "Index of Members, Subjects, Etc. The Friars' Society," NRO COL 9/5; see also "List of Planned Publications," 1792, NRO COL 9/8/8; "Transactions of the Society," 1804–17, NRO COL 9/3. Peter Brownlee, *The Commerce of Vision: Optical Culture and Perception in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia, 2018).

[36] The Irish philosopher Molyneux asked Locke if a man born blind and restored to sight would be able to identify a cube and a sphere by sight alone. Locke responded to the question in the *Essay*, and the question became an obsession. Weygand, *The Blind in French Society*, 61, reports: "the story of the man born blind on whom Cheselden operated for cataracts [was] a story found in all eighteenth-century philosophical literature from 1728 on—[it] became the founding myth of Enlightenment philosophy." See Tunstall, *Blindness and Enlightenment*; Marion Chottin, ed., *L'Aveugle et le Philosophe ou Comment la cécité donne à penser* (Paris, 2009).

[37] "Minutes of Proceedings of Thursday Meetings, The Friars' Society," 1787 to 1791, NRO COL 9/6.

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opened in 1822.[38] Norwich had: "a well-developed middle class quite willing and able to play their part in the great enterprise that constituted Victorian philanthropy." The city's tradition of support for the aged was visible in its Great Hospital, and in Doughty's Hospital, a sizable institution dedicated to caring for the elderly.[39]

Societies, hospitals, and medical charities were the backdrop for the founding of the institution, but its central direction was profoundly shaped by its founder Thomas Tawell. Tawell had an influential circle of friends that included the political and intellectual elite of Norwich (including many United Friars) who were fiercely devoted to him and committed to his cause.[40] In identifying Tawell as the donor of the institution's "stately mansion" and grounds, the Norwich literary critic William Taylor described him as "an iron-merchant of considerable property, who was threatened, if not already afflicted, with blindness."[41] Supporting the institution by speeches appealing for public support, serving on the governing committee, and soliciting, inspiring, and shepherding numerous donations, Tawell left a profound mark.

Men with visual impairments played crucial roles in founding institutions across Britain. Figures such as David Miller and Henry Moyes in Edinburgh were inspirational. With both considerable intellectual and economic achievements, and a compelling set of ideas about the potential of education for those with visual impairments, Edward Rushton was a key originator of the Liverpool institution for the blind. However, as Mounsey has shown, Rushton's wish to prioritize self-help and transformative education was subverted by other founders of the Liverpool institution. Tawell's role, however, was distinctive and his plans met no such resistance. His legacy continued to shape every aspect of the institution.[42] In contrast to models of the "illustrious blind prodigy," which often epitomized a prominent blind person who caught the public imagination, homages to Tawell referred to his hard work, personal connections, and monetary investment. While memorials recognized the crucial role that his visual impairment played in helping him to be an effective spokesman for the institution, it was his work and not his disability that defined his place in history.[43] Tawell's presence was so important to the

[38] John Taylor, famous for developing techniques of "couching" (cataract removal) from the early eighteenth century, performed surgery in Norwich for a time. Chris Mounsey, *Sight Correction: Vision and Blindness in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Charlottesville, VA, 2019), chap. 6.

[39] Nigel Goose and Leanne Moden, *A History of Doughty's Hospital, Norwich, 1687–2009* (Hatfield, 2010), 56, 55, 43–44, 30–35. The Great Hospital had the same admission requirements for the aged inmates (a guinea and a feather bed) as the Norwich Institution, NRO MS 453.

[40] Thomas Tawell's will identifying his close friends is in "Correspondence and documents related to Thomas Tawell," NRO ETN 1/1/114. He contributed to their charities but was not a member of the United Friars. Local historians who assume he was likely mistook the member Reverend Taswell for Tawell.

[41] W. Taylor, "Some Biographical Particulars of the Late Dr. Sayers," in *Poetical Works of the Late F. Sayers, M.D.* (London, 1830), lxxiii. William Taylor's reviews are characterized as the "finest body of English periodical criticism" of the 1790s. David Chandler, "'The Athens of England': Norwich as a Literary Center in the Late Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 43, no. 2 (Winter 2010): 171–92, quote at 176.

[42] Mounsey, "Edward Rushton"; Royden, *Pioneers and Perseverance*, esp. 26–41, 262, 263. Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 66. Glasgow was also funded (1828) by a man who was almost blind who gave 5,000 pounds.

[43] Compare with the objectification of the poet Thomas Blacklock discussed in Catherine Packham, "Disability and Sympathetic Sociability in Enlightenment Scotland: The Case of Thomas Blacklock," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 30, no. 3 (2007): 423–38; Turner, *Disability*, 98–99.

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running of the Norwich Institution that the committee sometimes held meetings at his house when he was unable to come to the institution towards the end of his life.[44] Tawell's views were especially important in shaping the Norwich Institution's care of those with visual impairments in old age.

A HOSPITAL FOR THE AGED BLIND

While the Norwich Institution shared the focus of other British institutions for the blind on vocational training, its service as "a hospital for the aged blind" sets it apart.[45] Old age was—and is—strongly linked to visual impairment, as well as poverty, and the indigent elderly blind were almost uniquely entitled to charitable assistance across eras and cultures.[46] Tawell's insistence on creating a new space to care for older people with visual impairment helped to ensure their inclusion, and the institution remained committed to the elderly.[47]

Tawell's oft-reprinted 1804 address to the first meeting of the Norwich Institution's subscribers explained: "the proposed Institution would surely be exceedingly defective, if it should extend no relief to the more aged blind also, *whose very incapacity for attaining any art, and whose total inability to contribute to their own support, only render them, in fact, more peculiarly the objects of your compassion*."[48] Tawell went on to tie his gift of a house and 1,000 guineas to the inclusion of the aged. It was "from these considerations" of the bleakness of blindness in old age that his desire to establish the institution had been formed.[49] The Norwich Institution drew heavily on such emotion-laden, humanitarian impulses tied to tropes of blindness in old age, and made clear the depth of its commitment in its first set of rules.[50] While all other rules were "subject to the alterations and modification of the patrons of the institution," only "that one constitutional point of providing for certain number of aged blind, proportionate [at one-third] as to the whole" was supposed to be "*sine qua non*." It appears from the admission figures that it was hard to fill this quota, and the resolution was repealed in 1819 (Figure 1).[51] However, the simultaneous drop in the requirement for admission from the age of 60 to 55 helped to secure an increased number of aged admissions from 1820. Unsurprisingly, the mortality rate dropped off for this younger group as well, ironically leading to a higher proportion of aged inmates in the institution after the repeal of the one-third rule. This increase was aided by Tawell's careful oversight of the transfer to the institution of a large charitable legacy earmarked for the aged blind, just after the 1819 repeal and just before his death.[52]

[44] Committee Minutes, 16 February 1818, and again in 1819 and on 17 April 1820, NRO SO 159/2.
[45] The Molyneux Asylum for the Female Blind in Dublin also admitted the aged.
[46] David Troyansky, *Aging in World History* (London, 2016).
[47] Institutional sources and Tawell's writings seldom differentiate aged inmates by gender, which limits our ability to speak to differences in consideration of older men and women.
[48] "An Account," NRO ACC 2004/78, 11. Our emphasis.
[49] "An Account," 11–12.
[50] "An Account," 20.
[51] Committee Minutes, annual meeting minutes, 1819, NRO SO 159/2.
[52] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/2.

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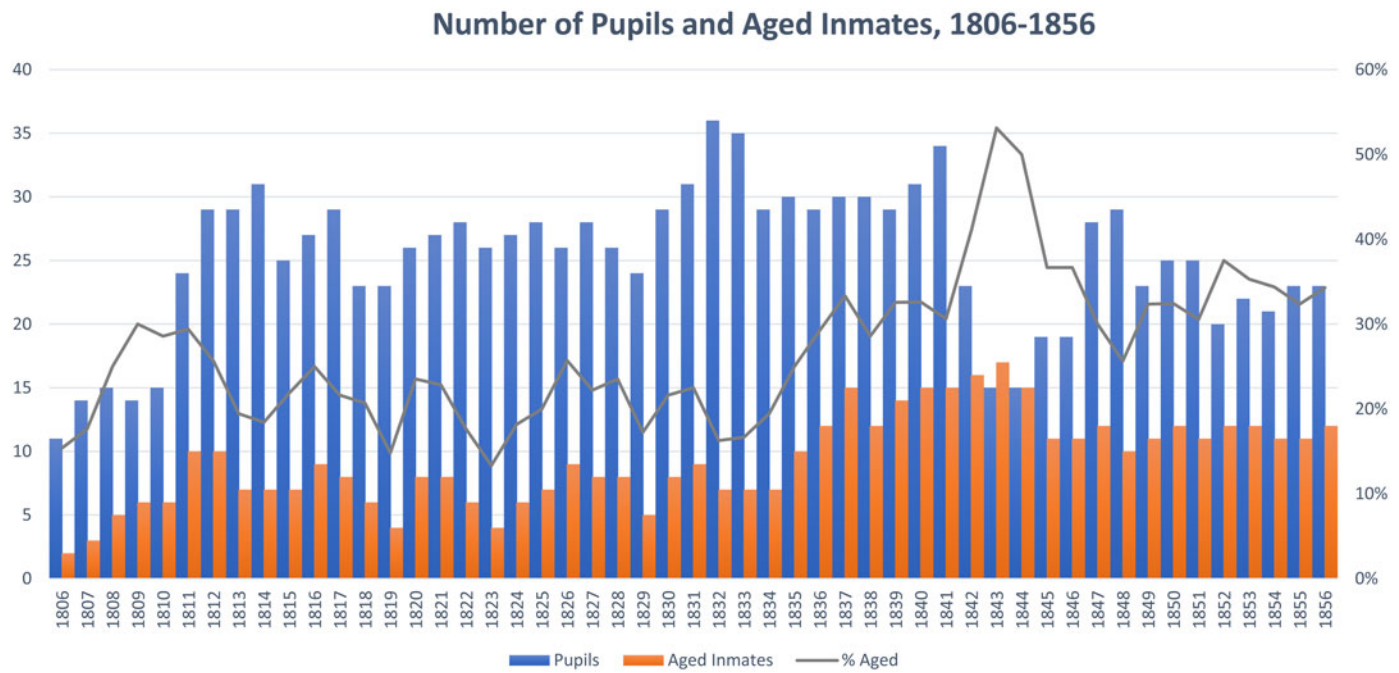

Figure 1—Chart of pupils and aged inmates in the Norwich Institution during the first 50 years of its operation. Data were gathered from annual counts (during the annual meeting of all subscribers, generally in March) in the Institution's Committee Minute Books (NRO SO 159 1–3). We tabulated additional data for 1806–11 from a list of pupils admitted and discharged from "An Account of the Establishment, Regulations &c. of an Hospital & School for Indigent Blind, Instituted at Norwich in 1805" (Norwich, 1811), 49–50. The pamphlet survives in NRO ACC 2004/78 (with the "turnover" date for each year's count in March). For years with missing data (1843 and 1848), we derived the number of pupils and aged inmates from the count of admissions/departures given in the subsequent year. For years where the Committee's count of admissions, discharges, and deaths did not add up to the number of pupils and inmates listed in their population counts, the population count was used.

Tawell and the Norwich Institution's founders were committed to supporting the aged blind, but their conception of this population emphasized their total disablement. The old were past learning: "Little more than a third of the blind persons in Norwich… are found to be *at that period of life, in which they could be reasonably expected to acquire a competent skill* in those employments which may be deemed the most suitable to them," Tawell explained.[53] The institution's treatment of the aged inmates was static, in stark contrast to the constant experimentation and accommodation that characterized work with the pupils. In a time when innovations in cataract treatments and improvements in eyeglasses meant that vision was one of the few areas where genuine progress was made in geriatric medicine, we see no medical interventions for the aged inmates.[54] Visual impairment was "corrected" or compensated for by training when it affected pupils seeking instruction; it was "comforted" when it affected those in old age.[55]

Ideas about old age in the long eighteenth century were complex, but it is clear that older people outside of the elite were expected to continue working as long as physically possible. Even the Norwich Institution itself desired "that the Servants employed in the house be elderly women of good moral character."[56] Errand-running and unspecified household tasks were sometimes undertaken by the aged inmates. But it is noteworthy, in contrast to expectations for the youth, that such "work" is only mentioned on a few occasions in the first half-century. Moreover, such tasks did not require training, but would instead have potentially played to the strengths of individuals who may have been long-term residents of the city.[57] The apparent exclusion of the aged inmates from any regular work activities is a departure from a cultural norm and highlights the importance of considering the intersectional nature of the experiences of those trebly marginalized by class, disability, and age.[58]

Within the Norwich Institution, young residents had different work regimes and lived in a separate section of the house. Nevertheless, disparate age groups did have opportunities to connect at shared meal times or when walking to and from church, and there is some evidence of ties between young and old. In 1821, elderly inmate John Boughen applied to be discharged. The governing committee allowed him to leave, but (presumably because of bad behavior) refused to allow him to take the clothing he received at the institution. The minute book reported of Boughen: "On leaving he Decoy'd [sic] Thomas Frankfit (A Pupil) to quit at the same Time without Permission." Although Frankfit returned five days later and was allowed

[53] "An Account," 1–12.

[54] D. Schaefer, "Medical Representations of Old Age in the Renaissance: The Influence of Non-Medical Texts," in *Growing Old in Early Modern Europe: Cultural Representation*, ed. Erin Campbell (Aldershot, 2006), 15.

[55] Committee Minutes, 17 February 1812, NRO SO 159/1. Case of pupil Lawrence Fuller, who was successfully restored to sight after couching at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital; see also December 1808 regarding pupils William and Elizabeth Pegge.

[56] Committee Minutes, 23 December 1808, NRO SO 159/1. Later they stipulated a desire for women over the age of 40.

[57] NRO SO 159/1–2. Errand-running was mentioned in 1809 and again in 1845.

[58] R. Brannon and S. Ottaway, eds., *The Cultural History of Old Age in the Era of Enlightenment and Revolution* (London, forthcoming); Troyansky, *Aging*; S. Ottaway, *The Decline of Life: Old Age in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2004); Turner, *Disability*, esp. chap. 6.

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reentry, the case offers an intriguing glimpse of a connection between two men of different ages, as well as demonstrating that, in reality, aged inmates might not fit at all well into their characterization as passive objects of pity.[59]

The language around blind youth emphasized their capacity to become useful to society and happy within themselves. However, references to the aged blind tenaciously clung to the association of blindness with pitiableness, listlessness, and depression. The supposed melancholy of *pupils* with visual impairment was redressed through the therapeutic qualities of work, a core rationale of each of the early institutions for the blind. Phillips notes the problem of blindness is disproportionately found in older individuals, but charities focused on vocational opportunities for blind youth "as the key to their social acceptance."[60] The London Asylum's first account rationalized its exclusive focus on the young by explaining that while past charity had aided the aged blind, only in the present Enlightened age were attempts made "to rouse [the blind's] dormant faculties;—to rescue them, even in early life, from a state of indolence, and its natural attendants, listlessness and melancholy."[61] In 1805, Tawell gave a scathing indictment of institutions for the blind that excluded the aged. He nevertheless reflected the same sense that the aged blind were helplessly subject to melancholy for which they could be consoled but not freed.[62] Tawell's humanitarian sentiment remained at the core of the Norwich Institution's principles. This was echoed in an 1845 Annual General Meeting at Norwich, at which it was asserted that the "aged and infirm … receive *every comfort and consolation* which can be bestowed upon them" while "Young persons and Adults," were "trained" so that they would "leave the Institution with the means of earning their own livelihood."[63] The contrast between consoling the old and training the young is emblematic of the Norwich Institution's engagement with these disparate groups.

Older patients (as they were sometimes called) undoubtedly benefited significantly from the society of their peers and staff, and there is not a hint of mistreatment in newspaper accounts or institution records. As we have seen, aged residents were not actually passive. Their individual agency and attraction to the institution are obvious in the successful applications of pupils in their fifties to be discharged from their pupilage so that they could be readmitted "as aged inmates."[64] Aged inmates pushed disciplinary boundaries by staying away from the institution longer than permitted, complaining about the food, and repeatedly asking for warmer living spaces. Some inmates brought sizable pensions to the institution, and they could demand and receive a portion of these, thereby retaining significant resources, suggesting continued possibilities for consumption and financial

[59] Committee Minutes, 1821, NRO SO 159/2.

[60] Phillips, *Blind in British*, 324.

[61] "An Account of the School for the Indigent Blind; St. George's Fields, Instituted, 1799," (1801), Guildhall Library M. This emphasis on disability as a problem to be cured was central to the emergence of the medical model of disability in this period.

[62] "An Account of the Establishment," 15–16.

[63] Committee Minutes, 17 March 1845, NRO SO 159/3. Our emphasis.

[64] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/2: Isabella Wright, age 57 (11 July 1825); George Bugg, age 56, a pupil "upwards of 8 years" (30 June 1823). Elizabeth Harbord was deferred at age 59, and readmitted as an aged inmate in January 1835, at age 63.

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connections outside of the institution.[65] At least some of the aged inmates kept a box in which to hold their personal belongings. Amanda Vickery has highlighted such separate spaces as important aspects of privacy for those in shared residential spaces.[66]

At the same time, the sentiment of pity gave limited leverage to aged inmates. Once their regime of care was set, there was little appetite for change by the institution's leaders. Aged inmates' requests for enhanced care were summarily dismissed by the visitors (pairs of trustees and subscribers who went into the institution weekly to ensure good order) and governing committee. In May 1809, for example, "patients" asked for a change in their diet and "requested that they might be indulg'd with a moveable bench in order to place it so as to avail themselves of the Sun's warmth and to shelter themselves against a Northerly Wind." Poignantly, too, in August 1812, the visitors noted, but without apparent intention to redress, that "the female patients express themselves hurt at being removed & deprived of the use of their former Garden."[67] The governing committee showed, especially in contrast to their flexibility and innovation in regards to the pupils, a static adamancy in the regime assigned to the old: the term "patient", and later the use of the term "Asylum," marked this population for permanent and passive institutionalization.[68]

If all of the "aged blind" in the institution had been in their last years, if they had actually been in "extreme old age and helplessness," it would have been less surprising that they were treated so differently from the "pupils," many of whom were, after all, middle-aged themselves.[69] In fact, especially after the entrance age was lowered to 55 in 1819, these older individuals represented the full, long span of the category of old age.

The committee's inclination to console rather than redress the conditions of the elderly was part of an attempt to leverage the "infinite magnitude" of the claim to sympathy these most "pitiable" residents had for the charity's subscribers, upon whom the institution "mainly depends for its support."[70] Working-age individuals with visual impairments had utility and purpose. Aged inmates had the right to humanitarian relief, but this support was tied very tightly to the emotive language of pity, melancholy, and incapacity, associations so strong as to suggest that they may have formed a regime that constrained the emotional community of the institutionalized, visually impaired elderly.[71]

[65] Committee Minutes, 22 July 1816, NRO SO 159/2. Francis Burrows refused to pay the half of his pension towards his maintenance according to the agreement at his admission.

[66] Committee Minutes, 12 February 1816, NRO SO 159/2. When Mary Ann Gooch died aged 68, "There was found in her Box besides her Clothes £59.2.4 in Money." Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009).

[67] Visitors' Book, 1809–1815, NRO SO 159/28.

[68] Other examples of requests denied are 14 May 1810, 11 February 1811, 1 July 1811, 15 December 1811, 29 January 1812, Visitors' Book, NRO SO 159/28. The term "Asylum" is used in the 1871 pamphlet in the uncatalogued box NRO ACC 2004/78. When the working men requested a fire to warm them after work, it was instantly granted on 21 January 1811.

[69] Admission ages for pupils ranged from 12 to one's thirties and occasionally even forties.

[70] Committee Minutes, 16 March 1846, NRO SO 159/3.

[71] William Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001); Barbara Rosenwein, *Generations of Feeling: A History of Emotions, 600–1700* (Cambridge, 2015).

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WORK TRAINING

The idea that the blind could be trained for work connected to broader shifts in late eighteenth-century thinking about the "impotent" and disabled poor as sites of potential utility, and around labor as a source of human satisfaction.[72] Encyclopedia articles and philosophical essays, like Bew's 1785 "On Blindness" discussed by the United Friars, insisted that education and the exercise of the other senses could compensate for the loss of sight on both an intellectual and "corporeal" level.[73] The Enlightenment's obsession with empiricist epistemology generated tremendous interest in sight, and in compensation for its loss, creating what Zina Weygand calls "a hymn to vicariance—the substitution of one sensation for another."[74] A vivid illustration in Norwich was the case of Robert Loome, who was denied admission in August 1806 because his case did not "come within the intention of this Institution, as he has a Sufficient Portion of Sight left, to prevent his *relying upon his feelings* to receive his instruction in Basket Making &c *as a blind person*."[75] The focus on substituting touch for sight to teach manual labor skills linked sensationalist to utilitarian philosophy. As the object of philanthropy, "the disabled person, 'restored to the society of other men,' was, if he were poor, to enter into the circulation of economic exchange by working, because philanthropy, concerned with social efficiency, did not sanction idleness."[76] The vocational purpose of the Norwich Institution connected pupils to the world of work, a central element of social and cultural life in industrializing Britain.[77]

The Norwich Institution showed persistent dedication to making its residents self-supportive via work training, but its first two decades were typical of the "inchoate, experimental character" of the early years of other schools for the blind.[78] Basket-making, winding sash line, sack-weaving, shoe-making, plaiting straw, making "Whip Thongs," and spinning were attempted in the first few years alone.[79] Over the next decades, the pupils knitted, spun flax for shoemakers' thread, and made mats, foot bears, belly-bands for carts, fancy bags, woolen shawls, rugs, and waistcoats. The most frequent tasks were spinning, basket-weaving, and mat-making; sack-weaving became a substantial money-maker but required significant amounts of space and investment in specialized equipment and expertise, which became more available in the 1840s, as we discuss below.

[72] Turner, *Disability*, 37, 22. Paulson, *Enlightenment*; Phillips, *Blind in British*, 43, 29–31, 64.

[73] "Observations on Blindness, and on the Employment of the other Senses to supply the Loss of Sight, by Mr. Bew. Read April 17, 1782," in *Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*, vol. I (Warrington, 1785), 162–63, 183–84; Thomas Blacklock, "Blindness," *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Edinburgh, 1778).

[74] Weygand, *The Blind in French Society*, 64.

[75] Our emphasis. Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1.

[76] Weygand, *The Blind in French Society*, 82.

[77] Jane Humphries, *Childhood and Child Labour in the British Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge, 2010); Katrina Honeyman, *Child Workers in England, 1780–1820: Parish Apprentices and the Making of the Early Industrial Labour Force* (Aldershot, 2007); Lynn Hollen Lees, *The Solidarities of Strangers: The English Poor Laws and the People, 1700–1948* (Cambridge, 1998).

[78] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 56.

[79] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1, entries from 8 May 1805, 2 March 1808, 10 March 1809, 15 March 1809, 17 June 1811.

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Establishments for the blind shared a sense of themselves as "kindred institutions," and the Norwich governing committee, habituated to utilizing networks of like-minded intellectuals by their participation in societies like the United Friars, corresponded with their counterparts who ran the London, Bristol, and Liverpool asylums.[80] The Norwich committee scrutinized goods made in other institutions to assess their own products, methods, and pricing.[81] Staff members went to Liverpool and London institutions to learn the best techniques in teaching the blind.[82] Interaction among national experts, trustees, staff, and pupils focused on the serious assessment and optimization of the work potential of pupils with visual impairments at the individual and institutional scale, seeking both high-quality work and evidence of successful work discipline.

The legacy of the United Friars—whose level of attention to their soup kitchens included weekly tasting of soup and weighing of bread—encompassed expectations that leaders of philanthropic organizations should be deeply involved in the everyday life of the institutions they supported.[83] The governing committee often examined specimens of work to "judge of the progress of [the pupils'] acquirements," and visitors examined work regularly to look for "comparative improvement" by the pupils.[84] In addition to the teacher for the main work (always a man) different "Womens Teachers" were hired for knitting and spinning, and for disparate tasks such as teaching shoe-making and plaiting straw.[85] Led initially by a matron who had been Tawell's housekeeper, and who worked for free, staff and pupils worked together closely at all stages of production and household tasks, with former pupils becoming assistant instructors and valued colleagues, further enriching and complicating the work environment.[86]

The Norwich Institution taught labor discipline, not just work skills. Time discipline was a feature of the institution from the first. A week after admitting its first pupils, the committee purchased a clock, and in 1812, they ordered a large bell to wake residents and call them "to their work, & their meals."[87] Our understanding of the patterns of labor and earning potential of pupils in the early years of the institution have benefited most by the survival of "An account of Work done by the Pupils" that covered 1816 to *ca.* 1820.[88] This meticulously kept workbook was a response to visitors' demands for more robust record-keeping and work inspections

[80] The term "kindred" to describe their peer institutions is used three times in Bristol's book of committee minutes from 1845–1852. "Minutes of the Committee of the Bristol Asylum for the Indigent Blind," Bristol Archives 41332 M/1/4.

[81] Committee Minutes, 2 July 1810, 6 August 1810, 16 December 1811, NRO SO 159/1; 10 June 1822, NRO SO 159/2.

[82] Committee Minutes, 22 May 1805, 10 March 1809, NRO SO 159/1.

[83] Tickets, notes, and sources related to the United Friars' Soup Charity, NRO COL 9/26/1–13; Report on the Meeting of the Soup Charity, NRO COL 9/8/13.

[84] Committee Minutes, 10 June 1807, 23 January 1810, NRO SO 159/1. Visitors' Book, NRO SO 159/28; and see outreach to Bristol for a basket-weaving teacher in 1846, NRO SO 159/3.

[85] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1–3, e.g., first reference on 10 March 1809; see also Visitors' Book, NRO SO 159/28.

[86] The coroner's inquest into the death of Superintendent Oldfield shows him and the blind mat-making instructor spending their evenings together. *Norwich Mercury*, 1 April 1843, British Newspaper Archives.

[87] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1. Clock purchase, October 1805; delineation of restrictions on the times when inmates could leave the asylum, 13 August 1806.

[88] Workbook, 1816–20, NRO SO 159/33. Some entries extend into the early 1820s.

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to identify "the kind of work, the quantity performed, the value of the material and the earnings."[89] The workbook shows minute attention to pupils' weekly work achievements, even recording the specific (and frequent) work-related injuries and illnesses of the pupils. It emerged from the disciplinary impulse that assured close supervision of each pupil.

An institution subcommittee in March 1808 reported "their work is well done, though their earnings are very small," with the best workman making only 4s. 2d. per week and the average pupil just 2s.[90] Thanks to the introduction of new products and training, by 1816–20, the high mark of earnings (calculated as the value of work done minus the cost of materials) was 10s. weekly for mat makers, always males. Fourteen out of the twenty-four male pupils who worked regularly were capable of making at least 6s. per week, which was double what their parish officers were paying to the asylum for their upkeep, and comparable to the London and Scottish institutions. Phillips shows that the average wage for men working in the workshops for the blind in Edinburgh in 1820 was 8s. a week, while in Glasgow (1835) it was 7s. weekly, which amounted to about double what the workers could have expected from poor relief, and exceeded the London institution's average of 5s.[91] The Norwich workbook's detailed weekly accounts show that one week could be very different from the next, as pupils took time off to gather osiers or shifted to learning new skills, suggesting that average earnings are very incomplete indicators of the work potential of Norwich's pupils.[92] Jeremiah Hewson, for example, averaged only 3s. per week, but he was capable of earning 6s. weekly, and was considered skillful enough to be hired to teach basket making. Pupils were able to achieve real proficiency in the handicrafts taught at the Norwich Institution.

The subcommittee of 1808 attributed the relatively low income of their pupils to the low price of baskets in Norwich and "some of the Makers being Women, and those not very young."[93] Typically ageist, the quote also reflects the broader fact that women's work was consistently undervalued. When the leaders of institutions for the blind questioned whether their pupils were enabled to make a living adequate to maintain economic independence, their examples of success focused on men. The Norwich workbook, however, shows that while girls' and women's earnings were even more variable than men's, top earners could make impressive sums. Elizabeth Barker made up to 7s. 4d. weekly making cord, and Frances Mack, Sarah Wells, and Amelia Storey regularly made more than 5s. weekly on cord-work.

Records of spinning are especially revealing because they allow us to compare the sense-impaired to non-disabled workers in other institutions. The workbook shows that it could take over a year to master the skill, but once trained, the best spinners in the Norwich Institution could consistently spin two pounds a week of wool or flax – similar to the output of sighted spinners in workhouses and spinning schools of the time. Nearby, Gressenhall workhouse girls spun an average of 1.4 pounds of wool

[89] Committee Minutes, 1 April 1807, NRO SO 159/1, is first mention of a desire for such a book; see also Workbook, 1816–20, NRO SO 159/33; Visitors' Book, 5 July 1809, NRO SO 159/28.

[90] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1.

[91] See Phillips, "Scottish and English Institutions," 189–90, citing Carton's estimate of London's workers making 5s. a week in the mid-1830s.

[92] Phillips, "Scottish and English Institutions," 190.

[93] Committee Minutes, 2 March 1808, NRO SO 159/1.

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weekly, and the average wool spinner at the spinning school in Nettleham, Lincolnshire, spun 1.94 pounds per week.[94] Often, women and girls at the Norwich Institution would reach the competency to spin 1.5 pounds per week, and then move on to learn other skills. Perses Starr, admitted in September 1815 aged 12, was "Learning to Spin" in January 1816, and was regularly producing 1.5 pounds weekly by September, at which point she moved on to learn cord-work. Spinners and knitters, however, rarely made even 2s. per week, more often 11d. to 1s. 3d., clearly well under a livable wage, although not an insignificant contribution to a family's income or resources. These pupils were hampered not by their abilities, which were relatively quickly achieved and impressive, but by the economic reality that hand-spinning could not generate viable wages by the early nineteenth century in Norwich.

The disparate work regimes for males and females were also reflected in reward money distributed bi-weekly to each resident "as an encouragement to industry."[95] The most diligent and skilled workers, like John Caley, who made about 7–10s. a week making mats, could earn more than a shilling of reward money every other week. The institution's gender-specific work training not only meant that girls and women had fewer ways to make a living after their work-training in the institution (thus replicating structural inequities in the wider world), but also that reward money was far less for girls and women—seldom more than a penny a week.[96]

By the 1810s, the patterns of work at the institution had stabilized around a few main crafts, with the pupils instructed in different types of work on the basis of their abilities and gender. Figure 2 shows the number of pupils recorded as engaged in different types of work from 1816–20. Mat making and basket making (as well as related tasks) made up most of the work done by males at the institution. Female pupils were engaged primarily in spinning, knitting, and the various steps involved in making sash line or cord.[97] The workbook additionally records housework and other odd jobs in which the pupils were employed, and distinguishes between different steps in the manufacturing processes, including tasks such as sorting osiers and washing baskets.

Basket making's longevity was related to the much lower cost of materials and the higher yield of earnings from the "value of work done." Pragmatic and cultural linkages between people with visual impairments and the making of baskets made it a particularly durable fixture, and a visual emblem of industriousness used in a number of advertisements and publications by various institutions for the blind (Figure 3).

The workbook reveals the wide variation in pupils' work experiences, as training was adapted to individual skill and strength. Likewise, while a few pupils mastered skills in the three years officially allotted for their training, the Norwich Institution,

[94] Gressenhall Spinning Books, 1796–1800, NRO C/GP 14/1a; Jane Humphries and Benjamin Schneider, "Losing the Thread: A Response to Robert Allen," *Economic History Review* 73, no. 4 (2020): 1137–52; Jane Humphries and Benjamin Schneider, "Spinning the Industrial Revolution," *Economic History Review* 72 (1) (2019): 126–55, at 138.

[95] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1.

[96] Committee Minutes, 2 March 1808 for the resolution, NRO SO 159/1; Workbook, 1816–20, NRO SO 159/33.

[97] One male pupil, Mark Hines, also assisted with "winding cord" while he was ill.

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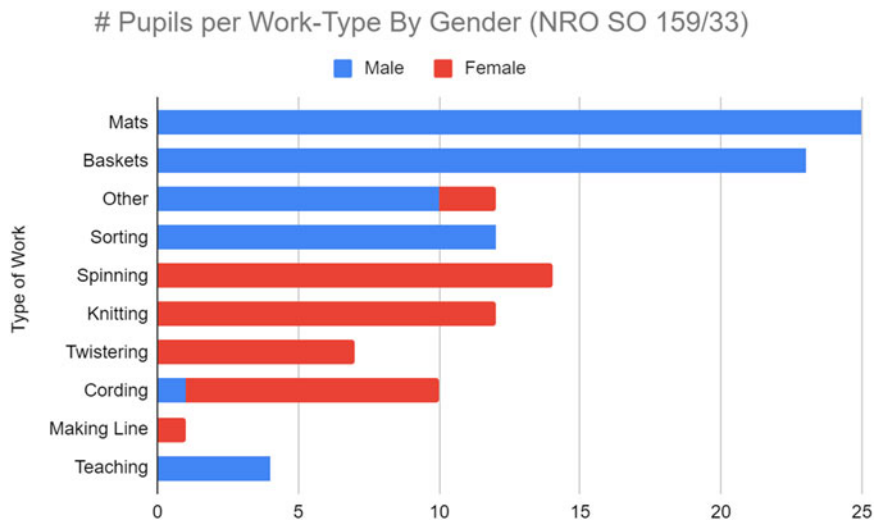

Figure 2—NRO SO 159/33. "Cord", "Cording", "Winding Cord", "Making Cord," and "Winding" were all grouped together under "Cording." Tasks such as "unpacking stores," "cleaning house," "house jobs," "washing baskets," "assisting," and "preparing stuff" were grouped together as "other." "Sorting osiers," "sorting rods," and "sorting stuff" were grouped together as "sorting." "Learning baskets/knitting/spinning/matts" were grouped under "Baskets," "Knitting," "Spinning," or "Matts" respectively. "Sash line" was grouped under "Making Line".

unlike others, made little effort to enforce a fixed duration of stay, highlighting the flexibility that was a central feature of their treatment of their pupils.[98] Long stayers like James Vale often plateaued in their production; in such cases, the institution functioned more as a sheltered workshop and home than as a technical school.[99]

Of twenty-three pupils recorded as discharged by the workbook, seven were dismissed after three years, six in two years or less, and ten stayed four years or longer. Only three were forcibly discharged for disciplinary reasons, and even these people had each achieved work competency before their dismissal. Noah Peake Thurling was aged sixteen, with well-developed skills in mat and basket making when he was dismissed in December 1819, for general bad conduct, "particularly for insulting the Gentlemen of the Committee," and without the usual parting gifts of tools and money. Robert Wicks was only thirteen, but already capable of earning 7s. per week when he was discharged for "being so extreemly[sic] rude and unmanageable."[100] When Robert Godbold (admitted in 1814 at age fourteen, and skilled at mat making by 1817) was discharged, the superintendent excoriated his behavior, condemning not only his abuse of staff and pupils, but also Robert's

[98] Compare with the London Asylum, "An Account of the School for the Indigent Blind; St. George's Fields, Instituted, 1799" (London, 1801), Guildhall Library PAM 1250; "Annual Reports of the School for the Indigent Blind…," 1805–16, Surrey History Centre, 9543/2/1–5.

[99] Compare with Phillips, *Blind in British*, 52, for a characterization of clearer typological divisions and the "Scottish" model.

[100] Committee Minutes, December 1819, NRO SO 159/2; Workbook, NRO SO 159/33.

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Figure 3—Annual report of the School for the Indigent Blind… (1805), Surrey History Centre, 9543/2/1. Reproduced by permission of Surrey History Centre. Nearly identical engravings were used by the Bristol institution in its reports, and on the Norwich Institution's posters related to its music festivals.

attitude: "I cannot but remind you, what little regard you have for the situation you are so happily placed in, and to those friends who obtained it for you." Robert had been expected to "study to gain a good name and to have shown your gratitude to the committee by such conduct" and to leave with a good character.[101] Such disciplinary cases reveal the institution's belief that its mission was to produce not only capable workers, but also pupils who had internalized the industrious and docile character that the committee hoped would ensure social integration when they left.

Some residents' decisions to leave reveal hints of dissatisfaction: Tabitha Woolverton expressed "a determination not to remain in this Institution." Some did not wait for permission to leave: an 1811 report included the statement that two men and one woman, aged eighteen, twenty-eight, and seventeen, "went away without leave" that year.[102] At the same time, however, the institution also regularly readmitted students

[101] Committee Minutes, 28 July 1817, NRO SO 159/2.

[102] "An Account of the Establishment, Regulations &c. of an Hospital & School for Indigent Blind, Instituted at Norwich in 1805" (Norwich, 1811), 49–50, NRO ACC 2004/78.

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who had reapplied, sometimes demanding that they earn a certain amount per week, but often simply agreeing to particular training requests.[103]

Negotiations around admittance and discharge suggest that while some pupils were evidently dissatisfied with their treatment, other residents viewed the institution as a desirable refuge. Individuals' ability to influence the length of their stay and the institution's enabling of their later work lives reveal aspects of the reciprocal and fluid bonds between pupils and institution that speak to the Norwich Institution as an organic community that was shaped by its residents, just as the residents were shaped by the institution's disciplinary regime.[104]

Work was a site of both discipline and agency for the pupils. The Norwich Institution's support for the individual efforts of its pupils allowed them to leverage their dedication to work for extensive benefits. A case in point is Edward Barker, who was admitted at age twenty-three in April 1809. A dedicated worker and trouble-free resident, Barker rarely appeared in the committee minutes except when he asked for additional time to make or sell baskets, and when he was granted a week's leave of absence in August 1811, "to go home (his Brother being in great danger of dying)." In March 1812, he "requested permission to have the Baskets which he makes from this time to Whitsuntide at the wholesale prices for his own use & benefit when he quits the Institution." The committee not only granted this request, but also allowed him to delay his discharge in June 1812 because he expected to "meet with a Situation." When he applied for implements at the next meeting, he received "Tools for Basket Making 1 Pound in Money towards a Trough *all the Baskets he made over hours by permission of the Committee* & half a dozen Rope Matts of different sizes with the allowance of 5d in the Shilling."[105]

Thomas Tawell, present at these meetings, must have been delighted at this indication that the Norwich Institution had fulfilled its "nobl[e] purpose of rendering [the blind] capable of providing for themselves a decent and respectable maintenance."[106] But the institution's support for Barker also showed the committee's recognition of the challenges—even hostility– graduates faced. By 1809, the institution had set a policy to support former pupils by purchasing their work. In 1810 the committee "Ordered—That the pupils discharged be supplied with proper materials for Basket making & articles which they cannot procure at other places, *in consequence of the Masters in the Basket Trade having refused to grant them any supply of such articles*." [107] Visually impaired people had to compete in highly competitive handicraft markets, and despite the efforts of the institution to level this playing field through innovative marketing and careful gathering and purchasing of bulk supplies, both the institution and former pupils often struggled to sell their wares.[108]

[103] Committee Minutes, 30 July 1810, NRO SO 159/1.

[104] Phillips, "Scottish and English Institutions," 205–06, detects "the shadowy vision of an organic, harmonious yet active and self-improving community."

[105] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1. Our emphasis.

[106] "Proceedings of the Second Meeting" of 25 April 1805 in "An Account of the Establishment," (1811), 31.

[107] Committee Minutes, 25 June 1810, NRO SO 159/1. Purchases were to be at a discount of two pence on the shilling. Our emphasis.

[108] On the challenges and nature of handicraft production, see Nigel Goose, ed., *Women's Work in Industrial England: Regional and Local Perspectives* (Hatfield, 2007).

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Barker's case reflects the lengths the Norwich Institution would go to help in this context. Months after he left the institution, in September 1812, he requested "a Board with his Name and Occupation painted thereon," and the institution supplied an additional six or seven dozen baskets to sell. A year later, having established his business at North Walsham, Barker reported that he was "prevented gaining a livelihood, by the Basket Maker resident there, having dropped his price three pence in the Shilling in order to prevent his selling." The committee determined that Barker should undercut the competition, promising to remunerate him for his losses for a month of artificially lowered prices "to defeat his opposition." Duly, on 20 December 1813, the committee paid the 3s. 3d. "due to him." The committee's actions reflect their commitment to former pupils known for "good conduct." Barker's determination to succeed in selling baskets suggests he saw his skills acquisition at the Norwich Institution as preparation for business, not just training in manual labor.[109]

Women and girls could leverage institutional resources in ways similar to males in the early years when female work was especially diverse and well-supported. Sarah Grimmer, "nearly blind," was one of the first pupils to enter the asylum, at age twenty-eight, in December 1805. A subcommittee on pupils' work in March 1808 lamented she had "only learnt to make Baskets, and has never been taught to make sash line," and explained the problem was that students were "left in great measure to themselves to choose their own employment, the consequence of which has been, that some have chosen badly, and others have chosen to do very little."[110] The dance between relying on student initiative and enforcing work discipline is evident here, and the solution was, unsurprisingly, to increase surveillance and expand the skills taught. The committee quickly hired a Mrs Baker to "teach the making of list [cloth] shoes." Evidently this strategy worked; when Grimmer was ordered to be dismissed, she made an exemplary move to enhance her future prospects by requesting more time to hone her skills. Characteristically, the committee allowed her to stay "some time longer in order to make herself more perfect in basket making," and when she left seven months later (July 1809), she received: "a Work stool & a seat, 2 Bodkins, 2 Knives, a Shave, upright & Cle[a]ver & a Last, Needle, & a pound of List for making shoes." A year later, the work master was "allowed to purchase 1 dozen and half of Baskets of S. Grimmer deducting the usual allowance," demonstrating both Grimmer's competence as a basket weaver and the institution's ongoing relationship with her.[111]

After the 1810s, fewer female pupils received work tools as their "gratuity" for good behavior and to set them up for future work.[112] Perhaps reflecting the feminism of the United Friars who supplied so many early leaders,[113] the Norwich Institution had begun with a clear commitment to making its female pupils as self-sufficient as possible. However, by the later 1820s, while boys and

[109] Committee Minutes, 22 November 1813, NRO SO 159/1; Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/2. On work training as drudgery at Liverpool, see Mounsey, "Edward Rushton," 98.

[110] Committee Book, NRO SO 159/1; see also Visitors' Book, NRO SO 159/28.

[111] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/1. Similar cases include Mary Hutson, 23 November 1808, and Sarah Wells, 19 April 1809, 30 August 1809, and 18 June 1810.

[112] Workbook, NRO SO 159/33; Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/2–3. Unlike male pupils, only two of the six females whose discharge was recorded in the workbook received any implements or cash.

[113] Chernock, *Men and the Making*, 23, 72, 96, 182, n. 63.

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men continued to receive work tools and vocational support at their discharge, girls' and women's parting gift was consistently limited to a 10s. gratuity, and by June 1848, when Mary Ann Elder had "completed her term of pupilage … some of the Ladies in the School kindly gave her several Books as a reward for her general good conduct."[114] The distance between Sarah Grimmer and Mary Ann Elder encompassed a significant shift in the vision of what a woman with visual impairment needed for success after her time in the institution was completed, and it was part of a broader set of changes in place at the Norwich Institution by the 1840s.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY AT THE NORWICH INSTITUTION

The main areas of change occurred in the management of work and the breadth of education for pupils. In contrast, the institution maintained a steadfast commitment to its core goal of caring for the aged. Such care changed little, only peripherally affected by shifts in vocational and academic training, with a slight increase of control around the movements of the aged as discipline tightened for all residents in the 1840s. The institution also remained closely connected to both the Norwich and blind educational communities throughout its history.

Between 1838 and 1850, the institution moved towards a more rationalized, bureaucratic system of work, ramping up surveillance, organization, and management of labor systems, although always within a handicraft workshop mode of production. Economic pressure to increase income pushed such changes, while the institution also responded to the preferences of its adult pupils by offering an alternative venue for work.

In 1838, the Norwich Institution expanded manufactures and commenced a new "system of independent employment" for non-resident "Journeymen" in response to ongoing demands for non-residential work from older pupils. Despite repeated, formal, and emphatic refusals to accept non-residential pupils in the institution's first decades, the committee had nonetheless regularly allowed non-residents ("outmates" to use Bergen's evocative term) access to training and education.[115] Day pupils were allowed for many reasons, including leverage from families, friends, and sponsors, but they also reflect the institution's responsiveness to adult pupils' preference to live in their own homes. Decades of persistence and accommodation had proven the need for the institution to broaden its remit and include a sheltered workshop for people with visual impairments.

Changes to the institution's labor management ramped up after 20 March 1843, when the governing committee established a subcommittee "to make a searching scrutiny into the conduct of the Establishment."[116] This inquiry exposed disciplinary and financial irregularities, and tragically led to the suicide of John Hall Oldfield, the 53-year old longtime superintendent of the institution.[117] Oldfield's suicide reflected the superintendent's personal anxieties about having mismanaged some funds, rather

[114] Committee Minutes, 5 June 1848, NRO SO 159/3.

[115] Committee Minutes, 1 January 1838, NRO SO 159/3. Bergen, "Philosophical Experiment," 158–159.

[116] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/3.

[117] NRO Norfolk Church of England Registers: BT ANW 1843_n-p. Ancestry.com. *Norwich Mercury*, 1 April 1843, British Newspaper Archives.

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than severe systemic problems in the institution.[118] The governing committee had made regular efforts both to increase accountability in the institution's financial practices and to improve profitability in its manufactures throughout the 1830s. Still, this "catastrophic" event helped to accelerate reforms, including new "departments" regulated by subcommittees like the one "for arranging and superintending the Manufacturing Department," which expanded space for sack weaving.[119] By 1844, the committee had "a new system of regulation for the moral government of the institution." Hours of work were extended and holidays shortened. Not only space, but the conception of work and supervision shifted. In July 1844, the subcommittee: "Ordered that the Employment Committee be empowered to have *what hands* they require in the Sackmaking department."[120] In earlier times residents were called "pupils," "inmates," or "patients"; here they are "hands." By March 1851, in a move that signaled the culmination of this new direction, the institution had "Erected additional rooms in the Weaving establishment and … As all the Workrooms now communicate with each other the comfort of the inmates is much increased, and *the advantages of a complete Superintendance is secured*."[121]

Women's work was less affected by such change because they had already been restricted to narrower, traditionally gendered activities like spinning, sash-line-making, and knitting by the 1820s, as we saw from the workbook. They do not appear to have been offered journeyman status, and would have escaped the newly intense surveillance of the weaving establishment. However, female pupils had to follow the new disciplinary regulations that were general to the institution, including new levels of time discipline.

The late 1830s brought a major shift in all of the British institutions for the blind, which began to explore the teaching of raised print, as a result both of new technologies and the broader embrace of education for the working classes. The Norwich Institution reacted quickly and committed to instructing its pupils to read from 1837, spurred by a visit from John Alston of the Glasgow Institution, who was a pioneer in raised print instruction. Because nearly all of the early books published in raised print were religious texts, reading instruction brought increased religious teaching to the institution.[122]

In reading instruction, "ladies" took the lead, another way in which gender dynamics shifted as the institution entered the Victorian era. Women donated books and money, and in June 1839, a "School Mistress," Mrs Killett, was hired to teach reading two hours per day, five days per week. Arithmetic was soon added, which was also taught by women.[123] The feminization of instruction was supported by the committee, which turned down offers by men to instruct the pupils.[124] Just as the early years of the institution were shaped by the United Friars and the wider

[118] Oldfield's case will be discussed in detail in the book project from which this article draws.

[119] Committee Minutes, 5 February 1844, NRO SO 159/3.

[120] Committee Minutes, 18 March 1844, NRO SO 159/3. The rules are unfortunately not recorded.

[121] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/3. Our emphasis.

[122] Bergen, "Philosophical Experiment," 153–54. On French schools' earlier embrace of intellectual training for the visually impaired, see Weygand, *The Blind in French Society*, 85.

[123] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/3.

[124] Committee Minutes, March 1845, NRO SO 159/3. See committee thanking the "indefatigable" ladies superintending reading and singing, and their rejection of an offer of a male arithmetic teacher.

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world of Enlightenment practices, changes in the 1840s connected to the vibrant milieu of middle-class and elite women's philanthropic energy, which was particularly strong in Norwich.[125]

As it set up an "Educational Fund" and created a raised print book lending system, the institution also shifted from Alston's to James Hatley Frere's mode of raised print, which included systematic musical instruction, which had been sporadically pursued in earlier times. In August 1843 a harmonicon was ordered to be purchased, and by the winter of 1845 pupils were enjoying organ music. Music and literacy education were so entwined that by 1847, reference was made to the "Reading and Singing School" by the committee, though, unlike schools in Liverpool or Dublin, the Norwich Institution did not specialize in music training for the purpose of making a living.[126]

Literacy education, and the music instruction it brought, transformed the soundscape of the Norwich Institution in a way that must have affected residents of all ages. But although a volunteer offered to read to the "inmates of the hospital" in 1850,[127] no other effort was apparently made to include the aged inmates in these changes, despite the fact that several of them were still in their fifties. Just a few small changes affected aged inmates in the mid-century. The institution started requesting that some of the aged inmates' parishes pay weekly allowances.[128] In the first comment on work and discipline specifically for the aged, the committee dictated on 17 November 1845 that "all the aged Inmates be expected to go on Errands or do any work in the House when they may be required by the Secretary or Matron, and that they be not allowed to go out of the House otherwise than by permission," suggesting a tightening of control.[129] By 1871, although they were actually still very much a part of the institution, the presence of the aged was nearly erased in a pamphlet trumpeting the institution's focus on the transformative power of the triad of work, literacy, and musical education for youth.[130]

While the 1840s brought significant changes for pupils, some essential characteristics of the Norwich Institution remained consistent for all residents throughout its first half-century. In all decades, we can see enduring ties between residents and their families and friends in their parishes of origin. Parish officers oversaw funds and assistance, and, along with family members, to whom most pupils returned when they finished their training, saw to the requirement that pupils be chaperoned to and from the Norwich Institution. When pupils were sick and requested to go home, they were always allowed to leave.[131]

[125] Sarah Richardson, *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 2013), esp. 68–70; F. K. Prochaska, "Philanthropy," in *The Cambridge Social History of Britain, 1750–1950*, vol. III, *Social Agencies and Institutions*, ed. F. M. L. Thompson (Cambridge, 1990), 372.

[126] Committee Minutes, 16 October 1843, NRO SO 159/3.

[127] Committee Minutes, 15 April 1850, NRO SO 159/3. The Reverend T. R. Govett began volunteering.

[128] Committee Minutes, 1 July 1839, NRO SO 159/3.

[129] Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/3.

[130] NRO ACC 2004/78, 1871 pamphlet, see 6–7; there is one brief mention that some aged women sew and knit, and that it was the only place in England to offer a "permanent Asylum" for the aged blind.

[131] On Sunday afternoons, unless sent on errands by the matron, pupils were "not to be permitted to go out at all, unless some Person comes for and promises to return with them." Committee Minutes, 1806 and July 1811, NRO SO 159/1.

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Residents' continuing relationships inside and outside the institution were buttressed by their shared experience of civic life. Links to the wider world of civic celebration were frequent and included all residents regardless of age, as, for example, when the residents were "regaled with Beer and Cakes" in 1813 to celebrate Britain's military victories.[132] Both the *Norwich Mercury* and the *Norfolk Chronicle* published dozens of articles on community fundraisers and donations to the institution.[133] The Norwich and Norfolk Hospital's annual fundraiser—a days' long musical extravaganza—included the Norwich Institution as one of the major beneficiaries from 1830, and other musical events were held in venues around the city for its benefit.[134] Music was often a vehicle for display. At Norwich, residents were trained to sing in church, and one of the charity's subscribers spoke warmly of an evening service where he "was much gratified with the decorous manner in which the Blind People joined in the Psalmody of the Day."[135] The Norwich Cricket Club offered the institution "the Gate Collection" and asked that "the Musical Band of the Blind Pupils in the Hospital" play during "the Interval" of one of their matches.[136] An 1839 poster for a fundraiser by the floral society also highlighted a performance by the "Band comprised of Inmates of the Institution."[137]

They may have been on the edges of the crowd—or even highlighted as a curiosity on such occasions—but the residents of the institution were a part of these communal events. As at the other institutions for the blind in Britain, the institution looked outwards to the community, rather than seeking to isolate residents.[138] Still, such shared civic moments would have had different functions for pupils versus aged inmates. The young could look forward to reintegrating more deeply into city life and domestic spaces once their years of instruction had passed. Aged inmates would have experienced such occasions as remnants of a shared past never to be recaptured.

Public displays of those with visual impairments could also emphasize both capacities and incapacities in a way that was central to the Norwich Institution's success as a philanthropic organization.[139] In 1809, a committee member remarked: "The present room for making Mats is not only very small & incommoding but unsightly to visitors," blending concerns about the room's awkward size for the working pupils with fears that its "unsightly" quality would offend the sighted observers of the work.[140] This display orientation was ubiquitous among institutions for the blind, and directly connected to their need to appeal to donors: one pamphlet appealing

[132] Committee Minutes, 15 November 1813, NRO SO 159/1.

[133] *Norwich Mercury* and *Norfolk Chronicle*, survey of articles in British Newspaper Archives, October 2022.

[134] Committee Minutes, entries for 31 July 1815, 11 September 1815, 17 May 1830, July–September 1828, NRO SO 159/2.

[135] Visitors' Book, 7 November 1813, NRO SO 159/28.

[136] Committee Minutes, 14 July 1828, NRO SO 159/2.

[137] On the long connection between visual impairment and musical performance, see Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 337–38. The poster is preserved in uncatalogued box NRO ACC 2004/78; see also Committee Minutes, NRO SO 159/3.

[138] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 56–57, 62, notes that by the 1830s "charities for the blind were in fashion"; Bergen, "A Philosophical Experiment," 154–55.

[139] Reference to displaying pupils and aged inmates include Visitors' Book, 21 September 1814, NRO SO 159/28; Committee Minutes, 6 June 1842, NRO SO 159/3.

[140] Visitors' Book, 24 June 1809, NRO SO 159/28.

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to subscribers put "Open Daily for Inspection" right on its cover.[141] The Norwich committee urged pupils to be on display "at their respective occupations" at some fundraising events, but only once were the aged mentioned as part of such displays. Repeatedly, visitors (both trustees who superintended and casual observers) noted *the work* of the pupils—what they were doing—and *the appearance* of the old. One commented that they: "found the House remarkably clean, and the Pupils at work in the most orderly Manner. The old People appear very comfortable, and are neat and cleanly in their persons."[142] For such observers, the young actively performed their capacity to reintegrate into the community; the old performed their capacity to receive assistance passively in an institutional setting.

Such displays reflect the institution living out its humanitarian as well as utilitarian goals. But while some elements of this display-orientation were genuinely about the accomplishments and skill of pupils with visual impairments, other aspects reinforced the emotion-laden assumptions of the blind as pitiful spectacles, and some evidence suggests that this was how the public reacted to them. The famed Belgian educator Abbé Carton, who wrote a comprehensive survey of institutions for the visually impaired, commented, "At some blind institutions there are notices requesting the visitors to abstain from all useless expressions of astonishment at what they see, and of pity for that great number of beings deprived of sight in whose presence they find themselves."[143] Thomas Anderson, another nineteenth-century observer, even recounted a story about a lady visiting a blind school asking, "in the hearing of all—'Well!—*poor* things!—do they *ever speak?*'" Although Anderson and the pupils both mocked her, the anecdote still shocks.[144] It is clear that while displaying the blind was successful as a philanthropic strategy, from a disability studies perspective we can see how it furthered the objectification of people with visual impairment.[145]

CONCLUSION

Although we have emphasized distinctions of age and gender for many aspects of the history of the Norwich Institution, our overall analysis of the institution's residents reinforces Phillips' arguments that the first wave of British institutions for the blind were: "open rather than closed in character, voluntary rather than coercive in their manner of recruitment, benevolent rather than disciplinary in their public *raison d'etre*."[146] Despite this benevolence, their everyday functioning inculcated labor and time discipline in their pupils and demanded grateful docility. Gabbard and Mintz remind us of the potential harm of the eighteenth-century creation of institutions for people with disabilities: "Institutionalization undermined the self-determination of disabled people, and as Foucault and others have correctly

[141] 1871 pamphlet, NRO ACC 2004/78; see also "Minutes of the Committee of the Bristol Asylum for the Indigent Blind," 1843, Bristol Archives 41332 M/1/3.

[142] Visitors' Book, 21 September 1814, NRO SO 159/28.

[143] Abbé Charles Louis Carton, *The Establishments for the Blind in England* (Bruges, 1838; reprinted London, 1895), 39.

[144] T. Anderson, *Observations on the Employment, Education and Habits of the Blind* (London, 1837), 79.

[145] Verstraete, *In the Shadow of Disability.*

[146] Phillips, *Blind in British Society*, 19, 336, 339–41.

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pointed out, increased control over and surveillance of disabled populations amplified their social exclusion."[147] Increased control and surveillance did occur through the founding of the Norwich Institution, but its focus on work training and work provision created significant space for the pupils' exercise of autonomy within its benevolent disciplinarity, albeit differently for males and females of different ages. Merging static, sentimental approaches to blind elder-care with utilitarian approaches to blind labor, from its first days and throughout its first half-century, the Norwich Institution demonstrates the complexity of responses to sensory impairment and warns us of the necessity of looking for differences within categories of disability.

[147] Gabbard and Mintz, "Introduction," 14.

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