Beyond the University: Collaborating with the Thackray Medical Museum

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UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

ARTS ENGAGED @ UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

- £850k University Transformation Fund
- 5 Research Fellows
  - Community and voluntary organisations
  - Government and public policy
  - Media and corporate
  - Creative and cultural industries
  - Museums, galleries and heritage
- Forging new partnerships outside the University

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- Strengthening existing links

Leeds Museums & Galleries

opera north

MARKS & SPENCER

THACKRAY MEDICAL MUSEUM

- Opened in 1997
- Occupies former building of the Leeds Union Workhouse
- Gallery themes
  - Health Choices
  - Leeds 1842
  - Disease in Retreat
  - Pain, Pus and Blood
  - Life Zone!
  - New Frontiers of Surgery
  - Having a Baby
  - Fantastic Plastic
  - Wilkinson Gallery

LEEDS 1842

WILKINSON GALLERY
PHARMACEUTICAL CERAMICS

THACKRAY MEDICAL MUSEUM

- Leader of the UK Medical Collections Group
- 47000 objects and 23000 books
  - Medical trade catalogues
  - Surgical instruments
  - Hospital and dental equipment
  - Pharmaceutical ceramics
  - Audiology equipment and hearing aids
- Recent research projects
  - Innovation in medical devices
  - Hearing, deafness and audiology
  - Understanding the body and diagnostic devices
  - Using collections to support science teaching in schools

THE PROJECT: PATENTLY INNOVATIVE

- Applying existing patent research to three major devices
  - Hanovia-Kromayer UV Lamp
  - Overbeck's Rejuvenator
  - Marconi Otophone
- Devise ten patent-driven object biographies
- Train museum staff in the use and value of patents
- Conduct two audience consultation events
  - The general public
  - Representatives of the medical industry
- Project dissemination
  - Conference paper(s)
  - Academic and museum journal articles
  - UKMCG workshop

THREE KEY OBJECTS

- Hanovia-Kromayer UV Lamp
  - Ernst Kromayer (1862-1933)
  - Treatment of skin diseases
  - Patented by Kromayer
  - Eponymous after his death

THREE KEY OBJECTS

- Hanovia-Kromayer UV Lamp

- Overbeck's Rejuvenator
  - Otto Overbeck (1860-1937)
  - Worked in brewing
  - Rejuvenator was patented heavily
  - Bypassed the medical profession

THREE KEY OBJECTS

- Hanovia-Kromayer UV Lamp
- Overbeck's Rejuvenator
- Marconi Otophone
  - Guglielmo Marconi (1874-1937)
  - Wireless radio transmission
  - Valve patented in 1904
  - Expired patent used in Otophone

STAFF TRAINING SESSIONS

- Introduction to patents
  - How to find them?
  - How to interpret them?
- Case studies: Kromayer, Overbeck, Marconi
- Participants researched a patented object from the collection
- Role of patents in displays
  - What can they add?
  - What are the limitations of using patents?
  - Which patented objects are most suitable for further study/display?
- Towards a “Top Ten”

FURTHER OBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

- Allbutt Clinical Thermometer
  - Sir Thomas Clifford Allbutt (1836-1925)
  - Engraved with the word ‘patent’
  - Supplied by Harvey & Reynolds
  - Made, and patented(?), by J. J. Hicks

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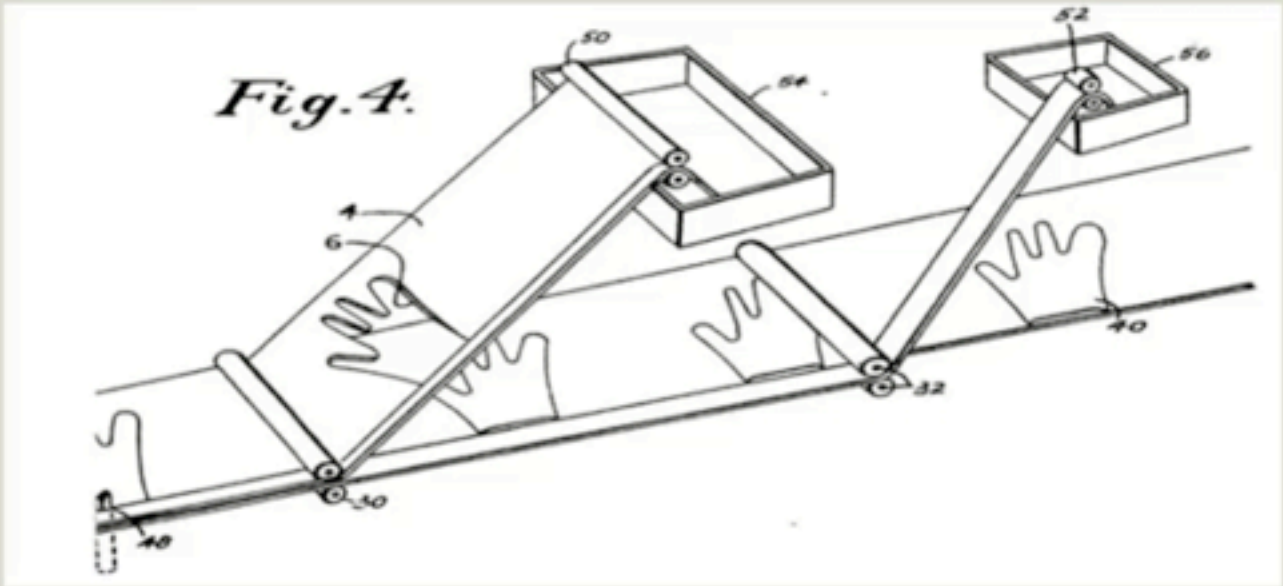
- Elastoplast
  - Smith & Nephew (1856, now FTSE100)
  - Devised in 1928, sold to medical profession
  - Trademarked, and further patents (e.g. 1951)

ADHESIVE BANDAGES AND DRESSINGS.

Messrs. T. J. Smith and Nephew, Ltd., Neptune-street, Hull, and London, Glasgow, and Manchester, have called our attention to “Elastoplast” adhesive dressings and bandages, whose chief feature is that they are easily moulded to the shape of the surface to which they are applied, and that they are non-irritant. The fabric base of “elasto-

FURTHER OBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

- Arbrook Dispos-a-glove
  - Developed and patented in 1970s
  - Method developed by Joseph Gerard
  - Trademarked in 1977
  - Common but important part of medicine
  - Long tradition of rubber gloves since 1890s



FURTHER OBJECT BIOGRAPHIES

- Macaura Pulsocon
  - Vibrating massage device
  - Claimed to cure numerous ailments, including rheumatism, paralysis, asthma etc.
  - "Dr" Gerald Joseph Macaura gave demonstrations of his device
  - Massive profit in Britain
  - Arrested and imprisoned in France for "falsely practising medicine"
  - Patented parts of the mechanism
  - Marked as "Patent No. 13932"

CONSULTATION SESSIONS

- Decision to run three sessions
  - Attendees at Saturday Morning Lectures (6)
    - Active interest in the history of medicine
  - Family representatives (4)
    - Identifying themes of interest to children
  - Contacts from the medical industry (3)
    - Medasil, DePuy, NetConstruct
    - Familiar with contemporary practices
- Major themes to emerge
  - Ethics of patenting
  - Nature of “the inventor”
  - The process of invention
  - Individual or team activity?
  - Just how original are inventions?
  - What does it mean for something to be “patented”?
  - Competition and conflict

DISSEMINATION

- Panel at 3-Society Conference, Philadelphia (July 2012)
  - *"Ownership and Invention of Medical Technologies"*
  - Patents and the medical profession (Dr Claire Jones)
  - Hearing aids and patents (Prof Graeme Gooday)
- Panel at International Congress of History of Science, Technology & Medicine (July 2013)
  - Participants from Canada, Denmark, Japan and Spain
- Public lecture at Thackray Museum
- Journal articles
  - *Museum & Society:* the role of patents in museum narratives
  - *Medical History*: Overbeck Rejuvenator
- UK Medical Collections Group Workshop

CHALLENGES

- Recruiting volunteers
  - Willing participants hard to come by
  - Incentivisation
- Consultation sessions
  - Material of relevance to both museum and university
- Tailoring practice-led investigation for academic publication
- Public-private sector gap
  - Generating/sustaining interest from representatives of companies in heritage

UNEXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Successful recruitment of two interns
  - Development of teaching and learning resources using handling collection
- Overbeck's National Trust Property
  - Training session for staff/volunteers (May 2012)
  - Public lecture (September 2012)
  - Establishing excellent relationship: possible future collaboration/loans
- *British Medical Journal*
  - Short article examining Overbeck's *New Electronic Theory of Life*
- *New Scientist*
  - Major feature article
- International Patent Research Network

REFLECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

- Project has strengthened links between the University and the Museum
- New avenues for collaboration
  - Other organisations (e.g. Overbeck's)
  - Internships
  - Teaching/learning resources
  - Undergraduate involvement
- Challenges have enriched both partners in collaboration
- Knowledge Exchange?
  - Dynamic and two-way