

sick and into their modes of thought, to such a degree as to ensure a considerate tenderness in dealing with them.' Gowers' ethos summarised : doctors should never allow a computer or data get between them and their patients.



The novel Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women embroideredminds@sandsthomas.co.uk

Marjorie: In the novel, Leslie at first equated 'conspiracy of silence' with the medical condition aphasia, but people with aphasia are not silent; they are extremely expressive in their own way, although their means of communication can go unnoticed, even by family and friends. I am very interested in how William Morris's use of language, if he had epilepsy, would have been affected.

Julia: British design education challenges young designers to think things through from first principles: to avoid presumptions - and isn't this what artists do and what scientists have to do? Iterative craft practices across all disciplines also feeds thinking.

Renata: Perhaps 'story' comes from a wish to get to the 'truth' but by different routes, routes available to minds that want to uncover links 'across' a horizontal axis rather than walk up and down vertically. I joked to Leslie that I like 'happy endings'. With a novel like *Embroidered Minds* - and I don't read novels, just textbooks, a happy ending for me would be if through this work, society became more aware and more understanding than it used to be.

Images C, E, H, I, L are from originals held in the Gowers collection at Queen Square Library, Archive & Museum.

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The nearest tube station is Russell Square.
 Buses 59, 68, 91, 168 and 188 serve Queen Square.
 The nearest mainline train stations are Euston,
 King's Cross and St. Pancras.

The exhibition has been curated by the *Embroidered Minds* collaborators. With thanks to these individuals and organisations for their support:

Queen Square Archives Committee
 Sarah Lawson, Librarian, Queen Square Library, Archive & Museum
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We gratefully acknowledge the support of the Gowers family.

JULIA DWYER lectures in interior architecture at the University of Westminster and Chelsea College of Art, and has participated in a number of collaborative public art and design projects over the past decade.

LESLIE FORBES is the award-winning author of 5 novels and author/illustrator of 4 travel books. For the last ten years she has been collaborating on projects with scientists and fine artists.

CAROLINE ISGAR: an artist, known for her prints and artist's book collaborations, including *The Secret Staircase* for the Foundling Museum, an A.W.G member and a past printmaking Research Fellow at the Slade School of Fine Art. www.carolineisgar.co.uk

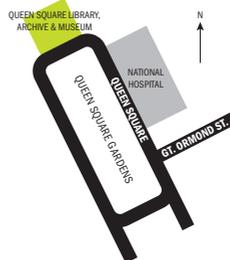
DR. MARJORIE LORCH is Professor of Neurolinguistics at Birkbeck, University of London. Her interdisciplinary research focusses on how language is represented in the brain using clinical, experimental and historical approaches. www.bbk.ac.uk/linguistics/our-staff/academic-staff/marjorie-lorch

JAN MARSH biographer and curator, author of *Jane & May Morris*, co-editor of the *Collected Letters of Jane Morris*, curator of *Black Victorians*, and current president of the William Morris Society. janmarsh.blogspot.com

SUE RIDGE is an artist, curator and lecturer in Fine Art. Most of her artwork has been made in and for public and institutional spaces, recently focusing on issues involving hospital environments. www.sueridge.com

ANDREW THOMAS is a graphic designer who works in print, branding and exhibition design for a wide range of clients including major museums, commercial companies and charities.

DR. RENATA WHURR is an academic, researcher and therapist whose expertise is in dealing with patients suffering from communication problems related to neurological speech, voice and language disorders.

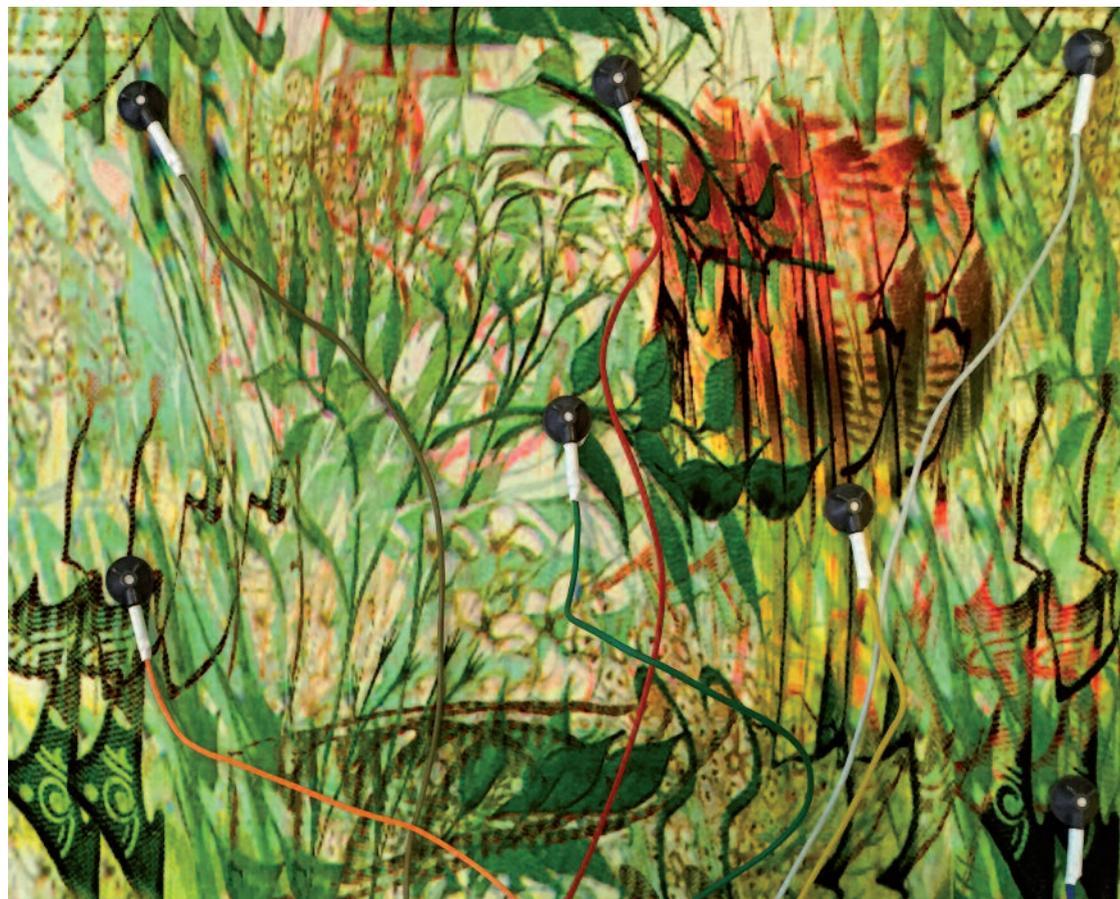


In association with



EMBROIDERED MINDS

WILLIAM GOWERS *and the* MORRIS FAMILY



AN EXHIBITION AT QUEEN SQUARE LIBRARY, ARCHIVE & MUSEUM
 NOVEMBER 2015 - FEBRUARY 2016

Part One of a gothic tale in which renowned figures
 of the 19th-century artistic and scientific worlds
 conspire to hide a tragic secret

Cover image: Epileptic Wallpaper with wires © Sue Ridge Printed by Optichrome Ltd., November 2015 Text © Leslie Forbes Booklet design: Andrew Thomas



EMBROIDERED MINDS is a collaboration between artists, writers, doctors and academics to investigate the relevance today of a 'conspiracy of silence' about epilepsy in the family of designer, poet and social reformer William Morris. Our investigation takes the form of a 4-part novel, each part linked with site-specific art exhibitions in locations related to the Morris. While informed by archival material, the project is not about what *did* happen, but what *might* have.

Exploring the history of Queen Square's National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery (NHNN), we discovered mysterious connections between 19th-century neurologist William Gowers and the Morris. This exhibition, launched for the Gowers' celebration at the History of Neurology and Psychiatry Symposium, weaves art by Gowers with the artists' current work and extracts from the novel. By allowing story to embroider history, we hope to enlighten both.

Our collaboration: the visual art created by Caroline Isgar, Sue Ridge, Julia Dwyer and Andrew Thomas in no way illustrates the novel written by Leslie Forbes with biographer Jan Marsh. Nor does the novel explain the art. Each discipline has expanded on the other.

Jan's chapters written in Jane Morris's imagined inner voice inspired Caroline; medical and academic contributions from Dr. Renata Whurr and Professor Marjorie Lorch encouraged Leslie to read about 19thC neurologists and scour the archives here, where she found Gowers beautiful drawings of the brain. His images, reflecting the fine embroidery stitched by the Morris, inspired Sue and Julia.

William Gowers: 'I need hardly remind you that between what we term "theory" and "fact" the transition is gradual... Observation alone is certain... But there is a region in which we must recognise hypothesis as absolute. It is the region below the surface whence no reflected light can pass, but whence all observed phenomena proceed.'

'The Dynamics of Life' an address, 1894

1st DISPLAY

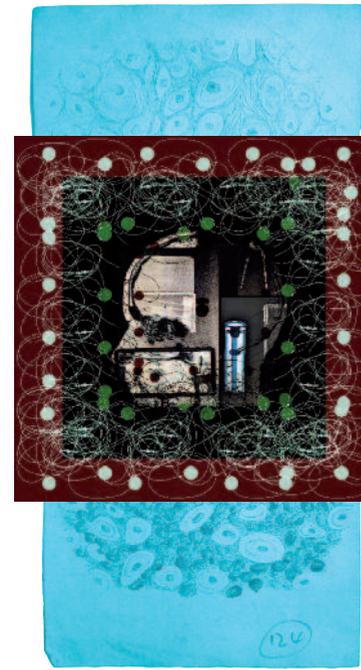
Sue Ridge's forbidding Morris influenced wallpaper seethes with tracteries of lines which turn out to be patterns from an epileptic EEG - 'a region below the surface', under the wallpaper. Hanging against the EEG pattern, Caroline Isgar's delicate images of women are framed on metal clipboards, as are copies of Gowers' etchings. Does this conjunction hint at division between science and art? Or at unity?

Story: Midnight, 1929, attics of the National Hospital, Queen Square. In a tiny wallpapered consulting room,



B: Map of Queen Square projected onto Nina Saaidi © Julia Dwyer & Sue Ridge

C: Brain X-ray image © Sue Ridge, laid over William Gowers' drawing



Jenny, the eldest daughter of William and Jane Morris, accuses neurologist Dr. Q of conspiring to hide a terrible secret about her family. 'Something bad happened to me in 1889, but I can't remember what it was - and everyone wants it covered up. They destroy the evidence as soon as it's found. They unpick the stitches in my memory.' As she lists connections between the hospital and her family, Q feels the wallpaper rustle to life.

I am doubled, thought Jenny. I stand divided. On one side there's me, an embroidered mind, on the other is Doctor Q. Should I destroy him - or myself?

From the forthcoming novel - 'Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women'

Leslie: Until starting this project, all I knew about the Morris was that William had designed wallpaper and married Jane, a Pre-Raphaelite 'supermodel'. William Gowers for me was just a ward at Queen Square's National Hospital, where my epilepsy was being treated. Then Renata Whurr, who had worked at the NHNN between 1983 and 2007, showed me how

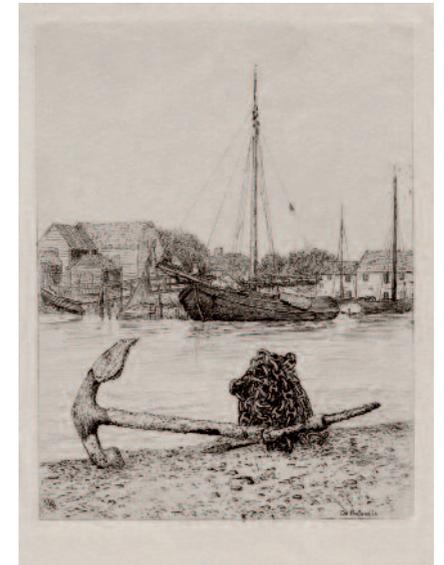
Queen Square in Victorian times had been a tightly woven circle of art, design and science. For example, at Number 24 was the hospital; at Number 26, between 1865 and 1882, was William Morris's bustling design firm. Intrigued, I visited the William Morris Gallery, where I learned from curator Anna Mason that his daughter Jenny had suffered from epilepsy, which had cast a shadow over her younger sister May. William too was suspected of having had the condition, but no hard proof of it seemed to exist. What astounded me was that Morris biographers didn't mention this hospital except in passing, although it was in his time entirely dedicated to the care of epilepsy and paralysis. How can anyone have missed the implications?

Anna: What you find can depend on what you're looking for. As a student, I was a mediaevalist, and walked around the Square for years without being conscious of its medical institutions.

William Morris: 'Science - we have loved her well, and followed her diligently, what will she do? I feel she is so much in the pay of the counting house...'

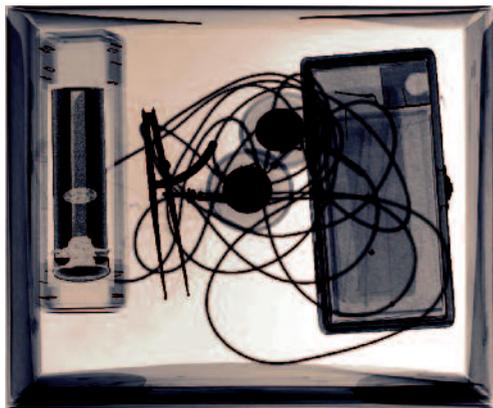
'The Decorative Arts': Lecture to the Trades Guild, 1877

Sue: I'm sure the Morris family would have intensively researched treatments for Jenny's illness, as any family



D: William Gowers' etching *De Profundis* courtesy of Ann Scott for the Gowers family

E: X-ray image of Queen Square box with Gowers' triple-wick candle, Von Frey Hairs, Weber's two point discriminator compasses and electrodes © Sue Ridge



in a similar situation would today. Personally, I'm interested in the rich history surrounding the subject of the Morris and epilepsy. Art, History and Science are equally important to me. With any site-based project, the work grows as the artist carries out research and then starts making, then the making generates more research.

Caroline Isgar: Initially I responded to the siblings' relationship in the shadow of Jenny's epilepsy. Then Jan's chapters in the novel, where Jenny and her mother Jane are embroidering together, gave me another perspective. Rather than portraying identifiable Morris women, I chose to create archetypal portraits overlaid with patterns that suggest wallpaper and embroidery, but also the condition of being veiled, restrained. Orchestration of colour and pattern parallels the Morris women's personal lives and their status as women at that time. I wanted the sense of images being memories, timeless, so that we can identify with the experience now.

'Q watched Jenny drift towards that place his friend Edgar Allen Poe had termed "the gulf beyond". An Absence seizure.'

From the forthcoming novel - 'Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women'

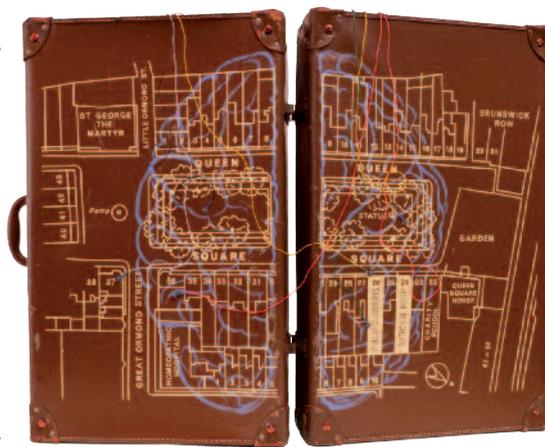
History, lost & found: Etching, Gowers' son recalled, was 'well suited to his precise and detailed style, and he became an enthusiastic and prolific etcher.' The proudest moment of Gowers' life, it seems, was when one of his etchings was exhibited at the Royal Academy.

In their 2012 biography of William Gowers, his great-granddaughter Ann Scott, together with neurologists Andrew Lees (of the NHNN) and Mervyn Eadie, record how they discovered a lost album of Gowers' drawings and etchings at Queen Square's archive.

Caroline: My choice of medium relates to Leslie's narrative: changing states of etching plate like changing states of mind. Drypoint suggests a less controlled line: crude tools, delicate marks, fragments; intensity of line softening with each printing.

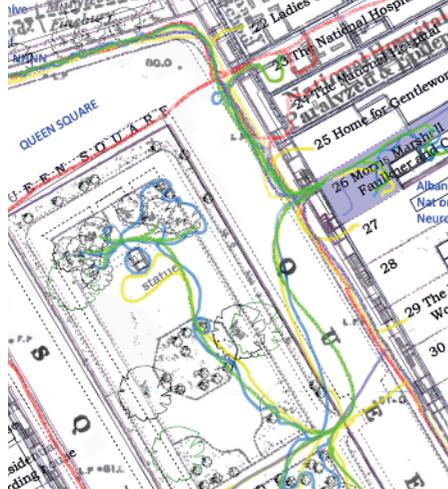
Leslie: From what undiscovered country of the mind does 'story' - fiction, art - emerge and diverge from science and history? Even if a creative person wore EEG wires for a lifetime, could statistics answer this question? Stories are born with the storyteller; stories are migrants, shape-shifters; stories often don't wind up where their creators had intended.

Marjorie: People shouldn't equate creativity with problem solving. Some scientists are like composers or etchers, searching for problems instead of solutions. Science too is a creative act. The scientist must choose what to study and how. To access people's inner lives, though, fiction and art can be more effective than a purely academic approach. Inclusive rather than exclusive, they can be better teaching tools: communicating science through people's artistic response to it. The first lecture I give my students is to encourage them to move from being passive receptors of facts to active researchers.



F: Suitcase with Queen Square map and brain © Andrew Thomas

G: Detail from Walks in Queen Square: a palimpsest of 1870 © Julia Dwyer



2nd DISPLAY

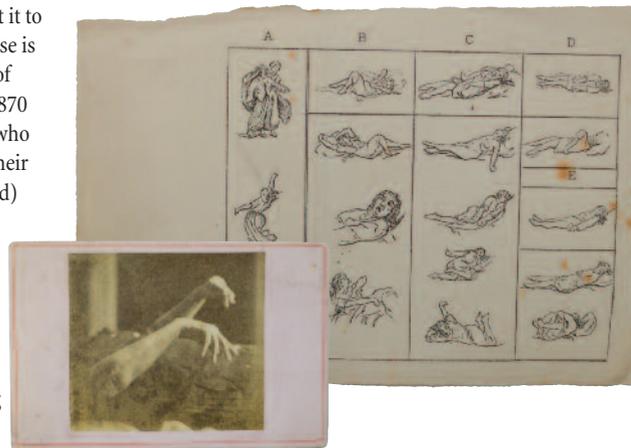
A battered suitcase stands open, its outside printed with ghostly hemispheres of a brain and an old map of Queen Square. EEG wires connect it to boxes inside. Suspended above the suitcase is Julia Dwyer's 'out of register' palimpsest of Queen Square. Overlapping maps from 1870 onwards, it allows us to envisage people who overlapped in the Square, and to follow their routes, experiencing the same (but altered) space.

Renata: I am very proud to have been connected with the NHNN. When I worked there, people interacted in ways they don't have time to anymore. Walking across the square every working day, as I did, I became conscious of its interlocking histories. It was a teaching environment in the 19thC and remains so.

Professor Rosemary Ashton: (*author of 'Victorian Bloomsbury'*): Most of the educational institutes that occupied Queen Square in the 19thC were aimed at women or at the poor, or both. The Alexander Institute for the Blind, for example, ran a home which by 1871 had 14 residents, mostly employed in sewing and knitting. Louisa Twining, who painted numerous watercolours depicting Queen Square, housed epileptic women in her own home for years. The greatest headway for women was made in art and medicine.

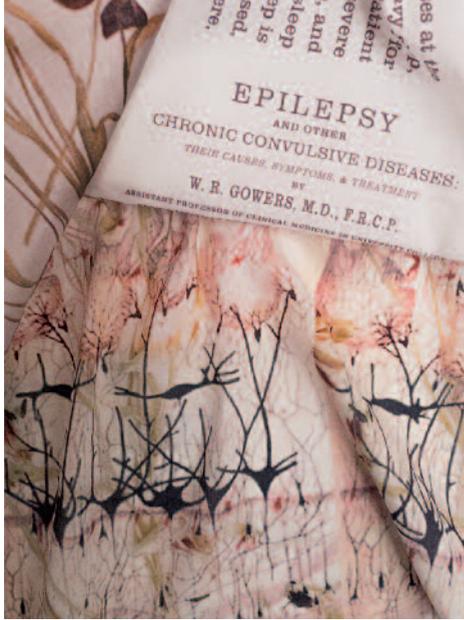
Leslie: One of the novel's characters - Q's wife, Etta - represents the Square evoked by Professor Ashton and Julia. A seamstress, Etta studies Latin at the Working Women's College (which Morris helped decorate) in order to become a doctor. It interested me that Gowers disapproved of women doctors, whereas his colleague, the neurosurgeon Victor Horsley, passionately supported women's suffrage, about which Jane Morris was ambivalent, despite being a working class girl. Contemporaries of Gowers referred to Queen Square as 'the temple of British neurology', comparing its staff with 'a priesthood for the spread of neurological faith'.

Anna: As the Morris Gallery's curator, I became familiar with Queen Square through the Art Workers' Guild, founded by admirers of William Morris and the Arts and Crafts movement - which Morris and John Ruskin inspired.



H & I: Photograph and drawing of patients with epilepsy

Leslie: One of the Guild's founders was architect Gerald Horsley, brother of Victor Horsley. And Gowers was another admirer of Ruskin, Ann Scott records. Issues raised by that spider web of links between Gowers and Morris drive the novel. The two men had much in common - natural history, as well as art. A brief comment in one Morris letter refers to Jenny being treated in the early years by Russell Reynolds, Gowers mentor. But no records survive of the patients who consulted Gowers at his practice in Queen Anne Street... or of whether his wife Mary helped him run the practice. Because of her self-effacing personality she remains, like Jenny, a shadowy figure.



Anna: It's possible May destroyed Jane's and Jenny's letters, but if so, I don't believe she did this out of spite. Jenny's condition was regarded as a private family matter. There are examples of Jenny's embroidery in the Gallery, she was certainly very proficient but her passion was for literature. Unfortunately scholarly pursuits were thought to cause seizures.

Jan: Medical opinion declared it inadvisable for people with epilepsy to marry [it was still against the law in the U.K. until 1970, in fact] so William would have known that Jenny required lifetime care. And Jane and May, ill or healthy, needed financial security, therefore he redoubled his efforts with product expansion, marketing etc to ensure that his business was a commercial success. At the same time he threw energy into idealistic political activity, half-hoping that a socialist revolution would bring about such changes as the NHS has done.

3rd & 8th DISPLAYS

Sue's jewel-like x-rays of a Queen Square archive box containing Gowers' triple-wick candle, Von Frey hairs (which test a patient's reaction to pain), Weber's 2-point discriminator compasses and electrodes. On one image the x-rays are collaged onto Leslie's brain scan, which is displayed next to books by John Duncan, Leslie's epileptologist at Queen Square.

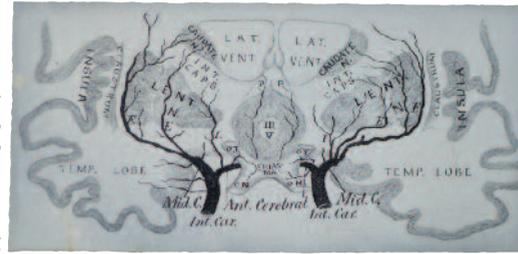
4th DISPLAY

A sense of vertigo overcomes anyone viewing Sue's epileptic tulip wallpaper. Its selvedge edge is adapted from original drawings of a seizing woman in the archives' Gowers collection.



K: Ceramic Memory Box © Andrew Thomas

L: Drawing of Blood supply to the central ganglia by William Gowers



'Papa makes his wild tulip designs have an orderly pattern,' Jenny said, 'but no one can enforce order on my seizures. I am a riotous weed. Will he cherish me, like those old tapestries he loves, or roll me up and lock me away for good?'

From the forthcoming novel - 'Embroidered Minds of the Morris Women'

Jan: Fictionalising Jane Morris's letters and thoughts, as I do in the novel, was one way of apprehending how she felt about her daughter's epilepsy, and whether she believed that William had the condition himself. Very little direct evidence of Jane's inner life is recorded in the form of diaries, and she did not express feelings openly to others (or if she did, they did not share the knowledge). In biography one must imagine what it was like to be the person one writes about - imaginatively consider how they experienced the world and responded to it, how other people assessed them. Thus biography is a balance of objective and subjective storytelling.

Leslie: I am convinced that Morris had epilepsy, largely because his symptoms correspond to mine and to a condition known as Temporal Lobe Epilepsy. Is it possible that TLE, common to a long list of novelists, poets and artists, might have led to Morris's obsessional nature and his creativity? Can TLE be inherited?

Renata: There might be an inherited predisposition, the result of a slight weakness in the brain's architecture of connections. However, epilepsy is an over-encompassing diagnosis of Morris's symptoms. Various conditions could be responsible.

5th DISPLAY

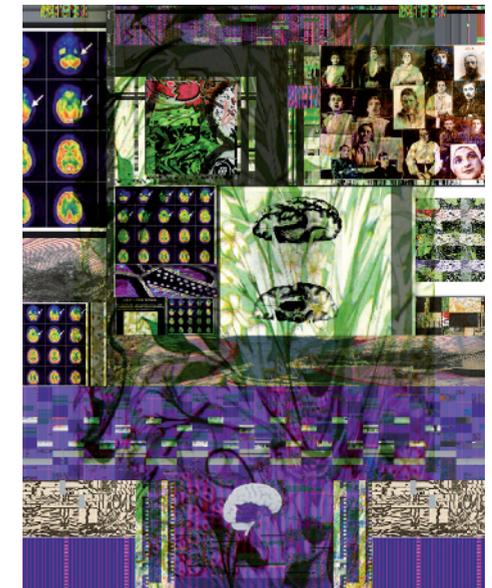
Sue's images of dead tulips and nerves, combined with Gowers' quotes, were printed onto fabric, then sewn by Leslie into a Pre-Raphaelite dress. Drooping like a marionette, it represents the way she feels after a seizure.

6th DISPLAY (SUITCASE)

Inside and outside the suitcase and on the glass shelves above and opposite it you find artefacts such as Gowers' triple-wick candle displayed next to artwork from the novel, gallery postcards, embroidery patterns, and Andrew Thomas's ceramic 'memory boxes', which he has filled with images of Queen Square, the hospital and the Morrisises.

7th DISPLAY

Under the wallpaper, under the skin: an assemblage of thoughts and working sketches indicates how our ideas develop. The project began in 2013. It won't end in these archives, which have only consolidated our belief that what could have happened to Jenny, does happen to people all over the world today. Modern doctors should read more Gowers, in particular this extract from a lecture he gave in 1884: 'Strive to acquire the habit of entering into the feelings of the



M: Collage page from SR research sketchbook © Sue Ridge