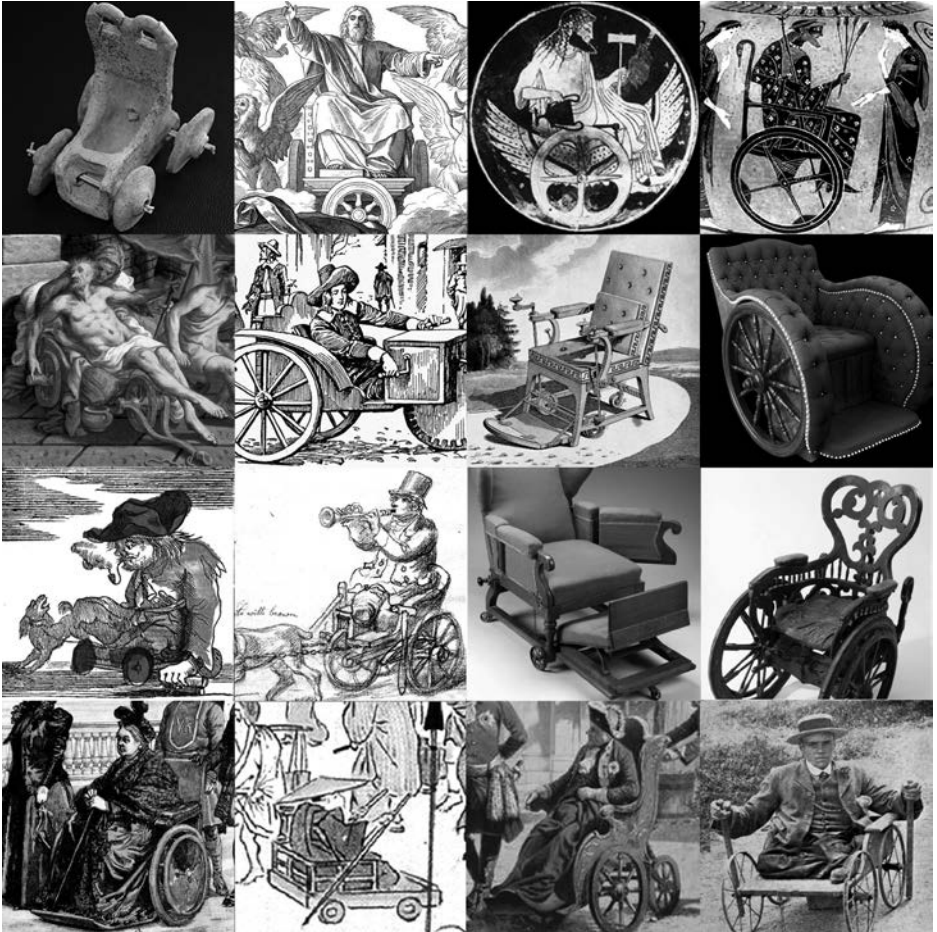


WHEELCHAIR HISTORY

The Disability Action Research Kollektive



This zine is a chronological visual history of wheeled chairs dating back to ancient times. Disabled people have existed for as long as humanity, and for as long as there have been disabled people, we have crafted tools to make our lives easier. People who are new to being wheelchair users may not know the distinguished and fascinating history of their noble steeds. Wheelchairs predate many other wheeled chairs like bikes, cars or office chairs. They may go back to the invention of the wheel itself.

Wheelchairs have been used by saints, sages, generals, nobles, kings and queens for hundreds of years. In the past, wheelchairs have been for the privileged few, and sadly, that has not changed in modern times.

Some say that with better manufacturing processes and technology, we can provide wheelchairs for everyone on earth who needs one. But the truth is that we have been able to do this almost at every stage of civilisation. Inequality is not a technological problem, but a social one.

Currently....

132 million people need wheelchairs, but only **22 million** have access to one.



First wheels were for pottery,
4200 BC.



First wheeled artifact, 3950 BC.



Solid wood wheel, 3600 BC



Toy chariot, 3000 BC.



Spoked wheels, 2600 - 3000 BC.





The Christian Bible describes God sitting on wheeled chair "...and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool, his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire." Daniel 7:9, 600 BC.



The disabled Greek God Hephaestus depicted as using a chair, 525 BC



The departure of
Triptolemus, 530 BC.





“Everything has beauty but not everyone sees it” Confucius, 551 BC.



Zhugue Liang was a Chinese statesman, 181 AD.



Saint Ephrem the Syrian, 375 AD.



525 AD.



525 AD.

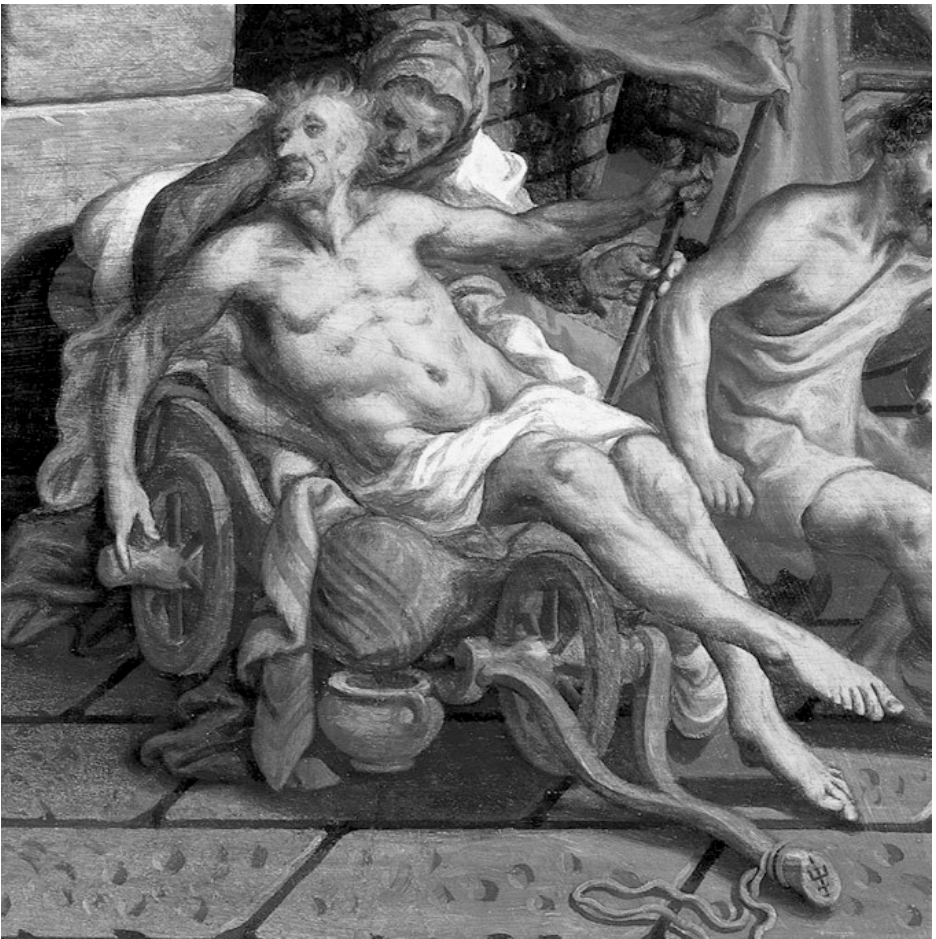


Wheelbarrow from the Luttrell Psalter, 1276.



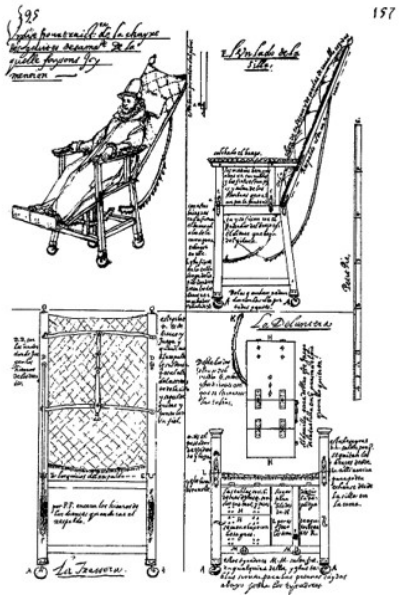
1470.





Top from Healing of the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda by Pieter Aetsen, 1575.

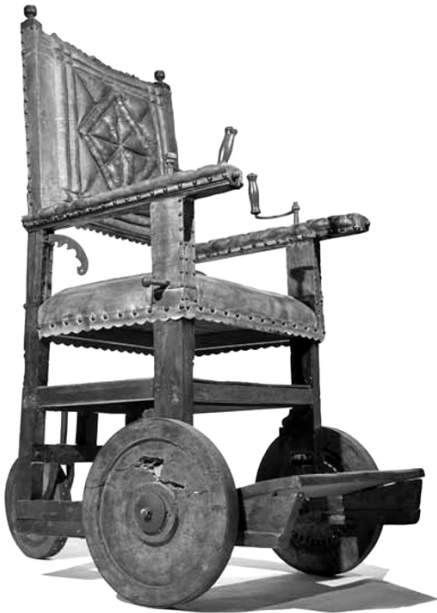
Side from Fountain of Youth by Lucas Cranach, 1549.



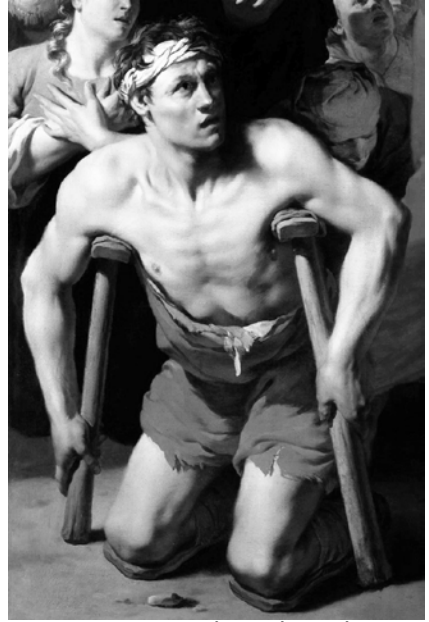
Adjustable wheeled chair of King Philip II of Spain, 1595.



King of France Louis XIV, 1638.



Chair of Sir Thomas Fairfax, 1642.



From St Paul Healing the Cripple at Lystra, 1663.



Life without access to a wheelchair

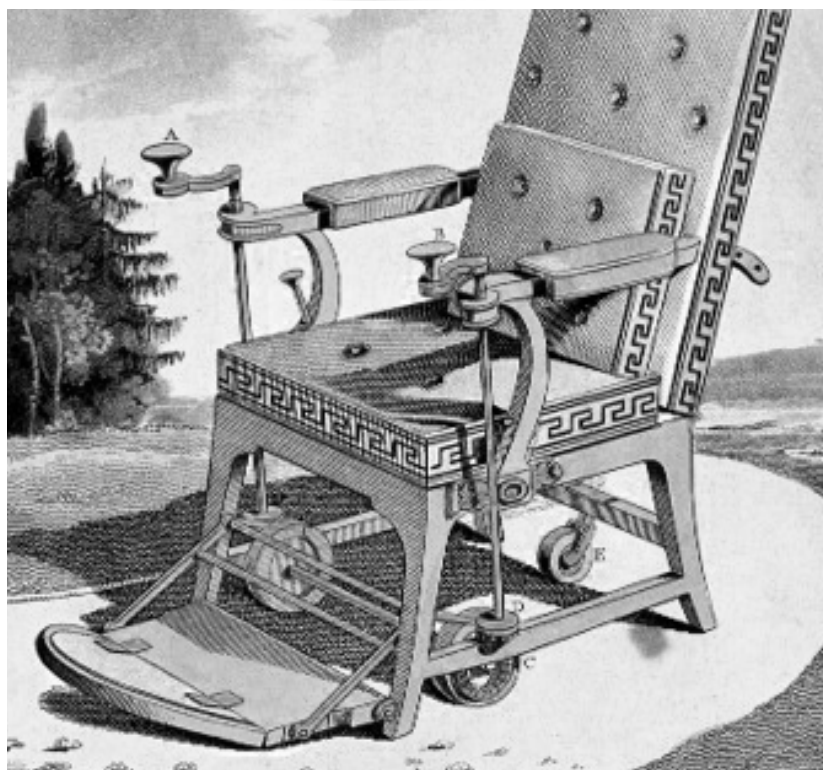


Stephan Farffler who invented gear driven wheelchair, 1655.
(200 years before first bike)





Chair design by Rollerskate inventor John Joseph Merlin, 1735.





Holy Roman Empress Elisabeth Christine of Brunswick-Wolfenbuttel, 1740.



Disabled commoners, 1776.



Andrew Whiston "The King of the Beggars", 1770.



Above Wickerwork Bath Chair by John Dawson, 1783.
Below Queen Mary and King George, and unnamed family.





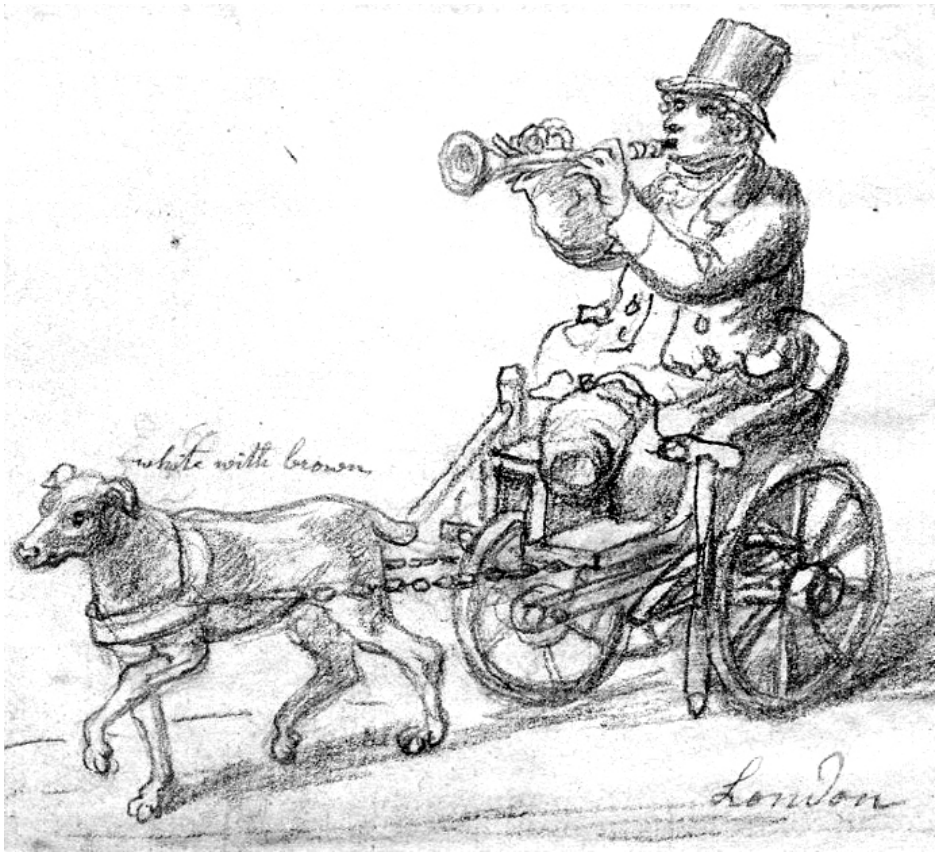
Chair of French
Revolutionary
Georges Couthon,
1795.





Same period, different social classes, 1800s.





Animal powered chairs, 1815.





Side hand velocipede with horse head, 1850.



Ward's improved recumbent chair with side transfer, 1880.



Side is first pushchairs,
1881.



Below is Queen Victoria,
1899.

INVALID COMFORTS Adjustable Couches, Beds From **£1 10s**

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Ambulances best in the world

Spinal Carriages.

Bath Chairs for Hand or Pony

Adjustable Bath or Spinal Carriages

Catalog showing various designs, 1900s.



Suffragette, Rosa May Billinghurst, in Rotary Invalid tricycle, 1920.



Intricately carved chair, 1890.



First wire spoked wheels, 1900.



John Conlon who travelled from London to Bournemouth on this machine in seven days, 1913.



Similar chair design seen in Asia in 1900s.



Frederick the Great of Prussia, 1904.

Different veteran support provided between 1928 Germany and 1989 Russia



August Sander, 1928.



Anatoly Golimbievsky, 1989.



First electric wheelchair by George Klein, 1950.



Joystick controlled
powered chair, Permobil,
Per Udden, 1963.



Wide range of modern wheeled chair designs.



Self built wheelchairs using cheap materials.





Modern wheelchairs for children.





This zine is produced by the **Disability Action Research Collective (DARK)**, which is a disabled-led group working to make disability perspectives, history, and research more accessible to a general audience. We are always looking for disabled (and non-disabled) volunteers to help write, edit and share their perspectives. Be part of something bigger than yourself, join us in the DARK today!

This zine features work by
Richard Amm