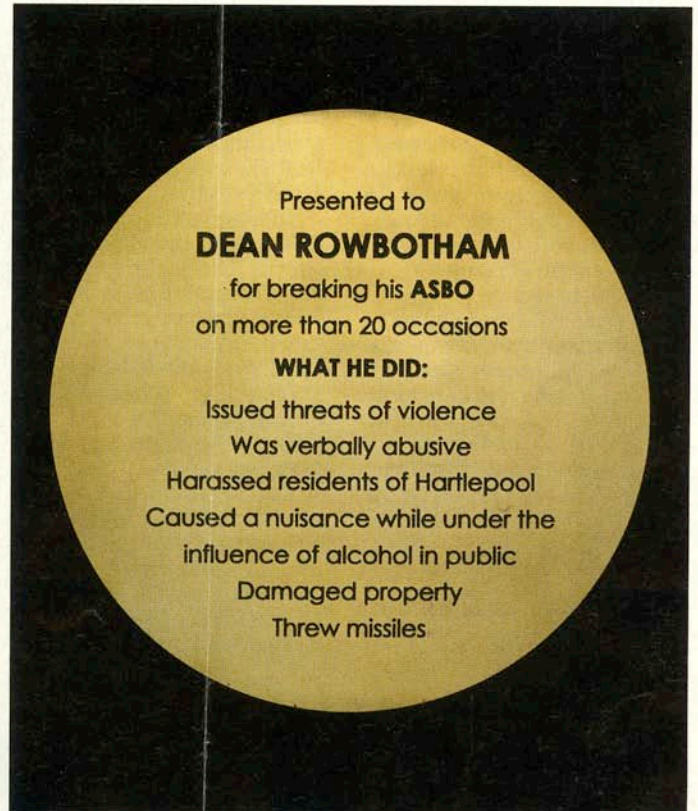


Asbo Medal (2008),  
by Michael Landy



Presented to

## DEAN ROWBOTHAM

for breaking his **ASBO**  
on more than 20 occasions

### WHAT HE DID:

Issued threats of violence  
Was verbally abusive  
Harassed residents of Hartlepool  
Caused a nuisance while under the  
influence of alcohol in public  
Damaged property  
Threw missiles

## Medals Of Dishonour

Until September 27  
British Museum

# HALL OF SHAME

From time to time, we could all make use of a medal of dishonour – something to bestow upon, say, a duplicitous friend or an unscrupulous employer. What we might not

realise is that people have been doing just that for centuries.

Curated by Felicity Powell and Philip Attwood, this show reveals the long, alternative history of the medal as a means of bringing shame, apportioning blame or inciting ridicule. It's the necessary dark side to the triumphalism of most medal-making and giving, a way for the righteous underdog, the defeated, deflated, persecuted or just plain angry to have their say.

The targets are far and wide. While cross-channel jostling provides interest in the show's early stages, with the defeat of

the Spanish Armada from the perspective of the Dutch providing an eye-opening example from the 16th century, the war-scarred 20th century is where the main meat of the show is to be found, a barrage of propaganda and anti-propaganda ricocheting between Europe and America.

What do contemporary artists add to the genre? Grayson Perry 'celebrates' label obsession and Bond Street shopping in a comically macabre contribution. George Bush, Tony Blair and our ASBO society are targeted in works by Cornelia Parker, Michael Landy

and others.

Yet, there are many examples from history that lampoon contemporary ills just as effectively. If, for example, we wanted a medal to present to the bankers responsible for the recession, we need look no further than Christian Wermuth's *The End Of Credit*. Its slogan, *Bankruptcy Is Now The Fashion*, and image of a faceless financier still ring with relevance some 300 years after it was made. *British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1 (020-7323 8299, www.britishmuseum.org)*

Martin Coomer

*Big Issue*