



The Progressive Treatment Unit (also known as the ECT machine). This was spooky. I kid you not, but next to this ominous machine were a battered old 1970s turntable and a copy of Jason And His Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat. We could only assume they applied the electric shock treatment whilst playing Andrew Lloyd Webber's biblical musical. For some reason, we found that even spookier.



A strange fabulous wheele thing. And that's the technical name folks. Some sort of early exercise bike? An evil machine I think. But strangely fabulous in a wheele sort of way.



The laundry. Tales have been told of patients being bundled into the driers. Note the spooky image on the first machine here.

could. So, whilst his asylum was symmetrical and ordered (females on the left side of the hospital, males on the right and no holding hands in the Chapel), it's a tight, compact design.

For over a hundred years, Cane Hill cared for the mentally ill. Famous patients include Charlie Chaplin's mother (admitted three times, on the first occasion being given hydrotherapy treatment with ice cold water), the half-brother of David Bowie (a schizophrenic who tried to commit suicide by throwing himself out a window at the hospital) and Michael Caine's half-brother (who had epilepsy and was left to smash himself to pieces in a cell).

The Care in the Community bill, passed in the early 1980s, was the death knell for Cane Hill and the other 'Water Tower' asylums. The

In the stores, someone had taken the time to tie a perfect noose around the neck of a teddy bear and hang the poor cuddly toy by a beam in the rafters.

hospital ran throughout that decade on borrowed time, finally closing its doors in 1991. Standing in the green belt and subject to planning blight and bureaucratic dithering, Cane Hill became a building that no-one could do anything with.

Many can't bear being outside this derelict hulk for long, few have wondered what's inside, and even fewer have been inside. But if you can ignore the staring empty windows, the sodden razor cut curtains which flap through broken glass, the odd bangs and crashes which sometimes can be heard coming from the battered buildings, then the creep show is only just starting. There are still artefacts inside.

Here are some highlights. Everyone asks about padded cells



Another ward, without the delightful cells. Thankfully too, the painters seem to have run out of headache-inducing pink paint..

and Cane Hill does not disappoint. There are hundreds of cells in Cane Hill - tiny rooms just big enough for a bed. You can stand in one and feel the claustrophobia hit you, the feeling of isolation and hopelessness, amplified by the confined space and high ceiling. Some didn't originally have windows, just narrow slits high up near the roof. None are padded anymore as the padding was removed when better drugs became available. But Cane Hill is civilized; at least the cells have door handles on the insides.

The wards have largely been cleared, although the odd bed or wheelchair remains. In one or two places, old hospital beds and frames have been piled against windows, as if someone had physically tipped the room onto its side. It was in one of these wards that I found the ECT machines - equipped with dials, electrodes and restraints.

The patients' artwork can still be found in Occupational Therapy - from odd doodles, to fully coloured portraits, to geometrical patterns to deranged disturbing scenes of hangings and bloody heads.

Speaking of which, in the stores and kitchens (which resemble huge open hangers with exposed iron beams and rafters) someone took a lot of time and trouble to tie a perfect noose around the neck of an unsuspecting teddy bear and hang the poor cuddly toy by a beam in the rafters. This menacing cruel