

HISTORICAL FACTSHEET No 6

The Hospital Corridor

The hospital corridor still retains the layout of the original military hospital from the first World War, with wards on one side facing the front of the hospital, and departments on the other side. From the West Entrance near the Nurses' Home, to the former Goodford Ward, the corridor measures 240 yards or 219.5 metres. Up until the mid 1970s, this was where the corridor ended. In 1975 a new Rehabilitation Unit was built beyond Goodford Ward, and the corridor was extended to its present length, with a new East Entrance.

When a disastrous fire struck the hospital on 27 January 1948, it spread swiftly along the corridor roof structure, and was only brought under control when volunteers broke into the roof to create a fire barrier. By this time, four wards and several departments had been badly damaged.

The corridor features in an entertaining story told by Australian Bryan Keon-Cohen, who was a house surgeon at Oswestry in the 1930s. One Christmas Eve, some of the junior medical staff had the bright idea of driving a car, possibly an Austin Seven, along the corridor from the Medical Residence, at that time situated at the east end, and out of the west entrance by the Nurses' Home. Unfortunately, on reaching the west end, the door was not wide enough to allow the car to pass through, so that it had to be reversed back down the corridor. As there was only six inches clearance on each side, this was no mean feat. We are told that the patients were delighted, and shouted encouragement as each ward was passed. Matron however was not amused!

Sources

1. *League of Friends postcard of the main corridor from the 1960s*
2. *Keon-Cohen, Bryan. Things – and other things. Glebe, N.S.W: Australasian Medical Publishing Co., 1973, p 24-5*