



Roslyn Burge

Callan Park : The Spaces of Silence

Callan Park Hospital in Rozelle, Sydney, was still relatively new when WWI was declared: its asylum buildings dominated the local landscape yet were already overcrowded. At the same time Broughton Hall, the adjacent private mansion, was offered to the government for the delivery of soldiers' care. In 1916 with increasing numbers of servicemen returning to Australia shell-shocked and traumatised, psychiatric hospitals and private homes were swiftly reconfigured to accommodate veterans. How did the military, community and Callan Park respond to this new population of returning soldiers' and adapt to their needs? And did the presence of veterans impact patient care and therapy across the hospital? Callan Park's institutional past and evidence of thousands of patients have been expunged. With many of its paper records, old and recent, gone - the collision of a variety of factors has left fewer than a dozen material objects identifiable as of this place. This presentation considers how the history of veterans' care in one of the largest psychiatric hospitals in the nation - a place of challenging and conflicting medical history - can be told amid the spaces of silence.