



Southlands Hospital, Shoreham.

It's funny, but whenever we mention Southlands Hospital to people, they always say to us: "Southlands? But surely that place is still open, isn't it?" Well... yes...and no.

The bit most people see and think of is the 1970's block and this is 100% still open (for the moment, at least). However, a little further west is a much older and totally overlooked part of the hospital, which has been empty for some considerable time and is being gradually joined by some newer parts of the hospital as the NHS gradually runs the site down.

So, we thought we'd have a look and chose a particularly wet and dreary afternoon, so the place was nicely atmospheric.



ABOVE: This is what most people look for when they go to Southlands, it seems to certainly be what most people remember most about the place. But the heating plant beneath it is derelict and on the part of the site that we were heading for.



ABOVE: There's quite a lot of it to look round, despite initial thoughts based on what's visible from the road (ie: not a lot). The site extends south by quite a long way. The view above is looking back due east from the most north-westerly point on the site.

BELOW: This is the view looking roughly due south from the most north-westerly corner of the site. Little did we know, but the tall building just off to the left in this photo contained a fantastically spooky old hall - more on this later.



We started our trek from the very first building we came across and worked our way more or less anticlockwise around the site: west, south, east then north.



ABOVE: The first group of buildings we found were outbuildings on the northern perimeter wall and were clearly used for storage. Part of these had been assigned to an engineering discipline, the others were more general maintenance and I.T.



ABOVE: This was quite a weird room: there were loads of wire frames, which appeared to be for drawers. But where were the drawers?



ABOVE: Unlike Hellingly and some other places we've seen, there was no real consistency in what was smashed. Some parts of the site which really accessible and very little was smashed, but some of the bits that were off the beaten path had taken quite a beating in places. It was quite odd.

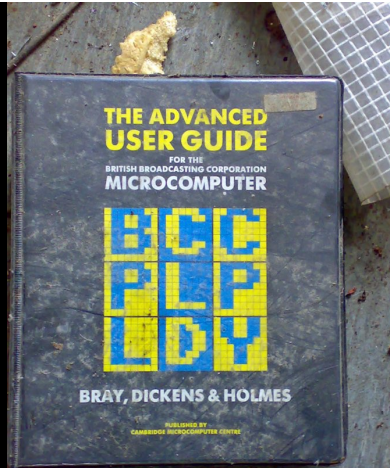
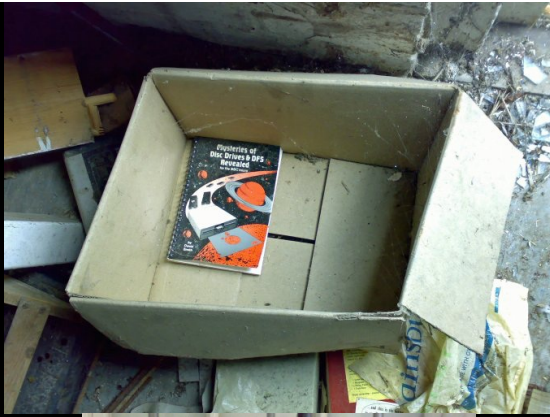


ABOVE & LEFT: Most of the other little rooms we found in the first set of outbuildings had been used just for storage, as these two photos show.



ABOVE & BELOW: Then we struck gold, just as we thought there would be nothing of interest in the outbuildings. This one room was quite unusual. I get the impression that a certain amount of teaching went on at Southlands, as this room was crammed with computer equipment. The BBC micro model B seen here was the computer of choice for most educational establishments in the early to mid 80's when there was a boom in the home computer market. The 5 and a quarter inch disc drives were quite pricey to get hold of at the time (roughly £80), but are totally obsolete in the present day. They had a capacity of about 400 or 800Kilobytes, 800K being roughly 1/900th of what can be fitted on a CD ROM in the present day (750mB). There were little stacks of these poor old beasts all around the walls. It was fascinating and a little sad, they were pretty good in their day.





ABOVE 4 PHOTOS: Back in the outhouse given over to engineering and maintenance, there was all sorts of weird and wonderful devices and things. We found a few books about the BBC micro computers seen previously and I think the weird tall thing is some kind of pressure gauge (?LOR) The box with the speaker in it looks as though it was some sort of self contained amplifier, due to the valves and monstrous transformer in it.

.....

We next moved into what appeared to be an accommodation block on the northern perimeter of the site. These ran as far as the north-western corner. Sadly, most of them were extremely well boarded up and we were only able to get into the one at the western end. As far as we could tell, most of the upper floors in these buildings are badly water damaged: the roof isn't great and in the one building we got into, we could not get to the upper level as the staircase had completely collapsed. These buildings did look wonderfully austere from outside, no doubt helped by the thunder and lightning in the distance.





BELOW: We have previously mentioned that we managed to get into one part of the accomodation block shown above. They are in very bad condition and the upper floors are remarkably dangerous, hence pretty well boarded up. The bathroom on the ground floor shown BELOW is about as good as it got!



BELOW: Today, we shall be looking through.... the OLD door!



At the southern end of the accomodation block is a gateway, which appeared to be the main way into the site at one time. The gate was automatically controlled and the switchgear is shown BELOW.



BELOW: This is the view looking back from the southern end of the Accomdaton block at the north-western corner of the site.



BELOW: Bike store or clothes drying area?



ABOVE: We're unsure what this building was, it looks very similar to a cricket pavilion! Quite why there would be one at a hospital, we can't imagine...

RIGHT: There was a row of what looked like stables on the western perimeter wall of the site. Some of them had these little fireplaces in. Curious. We wondered if they were forges.



.....

BELOW: We next moved due south towards the more overgrown and interesting parts of the site. Mwahaha.



BELOW: This is the view looking back due north towards the Accommodation Block. The "stable like" buildings are to the left of the photo.



BELOW: This is the northern end of the building to the right of the above photo, the middle of the site. We set about finding a way in, walking around the northern side of the building.



BELOW: A little further along the northern side, we found this covered walkway, which was our way into the building. Look at the brick arch on the right hand side of the photo: the walkway continued further north and joined onto another building, which has since been demolished. All around the remaining buildings, there were remnants of paths and the positions of razed walls. Every so often, the scrub was permeated by different types of flooring which would have been particular to a room or a corridor.



BELOW: The view to the left (east) of the walkway and the eastern end of the building. The pathway marked out by the orange webbing leads to more modern buildings to the south-eastern quarter of the site.



ABOVE: The corridors that remained had incredibly ornate and interesting curved windows, which must have been quite expensive to get replacement glass for!

BELOW: There is one of these little buildings on either side of the covered walkway (purpose unknown). The eastern one is still just about standing. The one on the western side has totally collapsed and is little more than a roof on a small pile of bricks.



.....

Time to go inside and have a look around!



BELOW: The corridors, whilst a reasonable length, were quite cramped and I can imagine could be quite difficult when it comes to moving some modern beds and equipment around. I'm guessing that we have been quite spoilt with the likes of Hellingly and West Park Lunatic Asylums and the tremendous networks of corridors they both have.



BELOW: There were some fantastically creepy old rooms hidden behind the boarded up windows. The distant rumbling of thunder added dramatically to the atmosphere inside. The majority of the building was in complete darkness and we both hoped that the batteries in our spot lamps would hold out until we found our way out again...!



BELOW: Agent Skyframe indulging in a bit of sneaking. The upper floors are concrete floored as opposed to the wooden ones on the ground floor (and the underfloor void for pipework and ankle breakages) and therefore the safest way around these places on many occasions.



BELOW: Something of an oddity, this: it's a very, very small fireplace. It has all the makings of a fireplace - there's a fireback, a cowl and a chimney upwards above it, but the fireback is made of decorative brickwork, there is no hearth to speak of and nowhere in front of it to build a fire! Insane.



BELOW: We're guessing some of the residents didn't enjoy baths much. Seriously, we think that any would be developers were trying to ascertain the direction of pipework either for adaptation or demolition purposes.



BELOW: As with most of the buildings we have encountered, there are some very orderly holes in the floor, caused by either cable finding or metal thieves stripping out cables. It is worthy of note that what appear to be reflections of the spotlight bulbs in the windows aren't consistent with how we were holding them at the time. We would expect the distance between the light sources to be the same on both panes of glass. The distance changes are too great to be caused by differences in distances between separate panes of double glazing and the windows aren't double glazed. The photo has not been edited in any way other than to make the features of a very dark room visible.



BELOW LEFT & RIGHT: Kid graffiti - there is a large school nearby...



BELOW: This building has been empty and unsecured for quite some time. As a result, the vandalism was pretty bad in places.



ABOVE: A little taster of how the place was without decent lighting: one of our spotlamps started to go dim at this point. Time for a recharge...



ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: In some of the rooms, we found odd little glimpses of the lives of the people that used to live or work here - the unicorn poster was quite a nice find.

BELOW: As these buildings are gradually taken apart for either demolition or redevelopment (if they're lucky enough!), it's often possible to see glimpses of how these places have been gradually adapted or altered to suit different purposes. Often's the occasion when we see sections of wall with the render removed and arches bricked up, only to have a concrete lintel inside the arch and a modern doorway made into it with a fraction of the character, usually.



BELOW: Nature takes hold: we haven't encountered many sites where nature has had time to truly reassert itself except for Hellingly, so it was nice to see such a proliferation of foliage here - dereliction often brings about something new and very pretty if left alone.





ABOVE & BELOW: It became apparent to us pretty much instantly on arriving at this site that some of it had already been cleared. There was evidence that the covered walkways should have continued a lot further than they appeared to - here and there we found areas of tiled floor peeping through the grass, suggesting rooms and walkways razed to the ground (BELOW). The remaining half of the arch in the picture ABOVE suggests that this may have been a small courtyard and it is intriguing to imagine what would have been attached to the other side of it. We followed the path through the intriguing and peaceful wilderness, looking for the next doorway or window to invite us in.



BELOW: Gothic horror spookiness abound. Fantastic.





BELOW: The darkness in this block seemed somehow darker than normal darkness - it just seemed to suck all available light out of our one remaining spot lamp. It was getting quite difficult to take photos that were visible! The weird colours on this one come from my shoving the contrast and saturation up to high levels so that you at home can see what I was trying to take photos of!



BELOW: Whilst nothing near the same scale as Hellingly and West Park, this little hall was still an interesting find - it had a lot of atmosphere (and bird shit) and must have been quite nice in its day.



BELOW: Agent Skyframe picks his way carefully across the hall. The floor was awash with a mixture of water, moss and pigeon poo and was exceptionally slippery.



BELOW: There was a large dining hall adjacent to the main hall. The roof construction was particularly interesting in here.





BELOW & BELOW: A lot of the rooves around the Dining Hall and Kitchens were heavily water damaged and had either fallen in or were in the process of falling in. We proceeded with care.





ABOVE: The majority of the electrical installations we found had been stripped out and were pretty trashed. Again, we couldn't be sure if this had been done by metal thieves previously, but this time it looked more methodical, so we are guessing that as parts of the site have been removed, they have been isolated and removed from the electrical layout gradually.

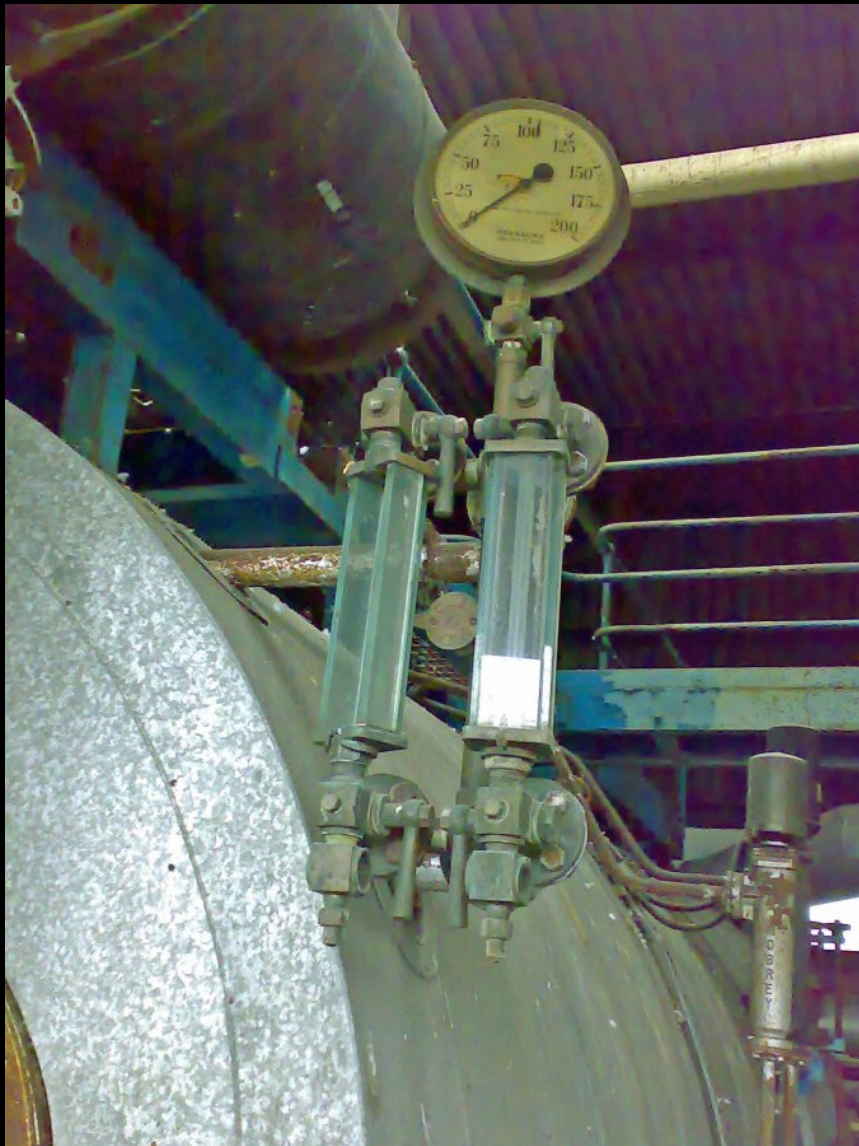
BELOW: Parting shot of the block with the Hall, Kitchens and Canteen Hall, looking back due South.





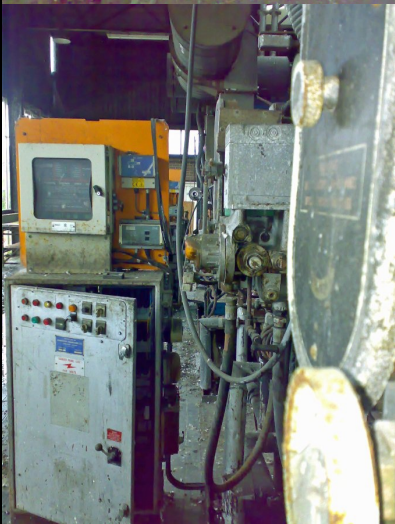
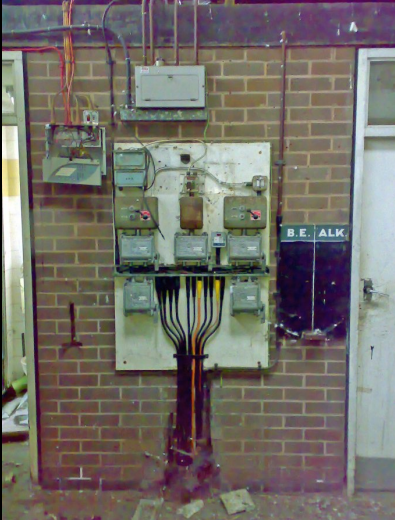
ABOVE LEFT & RIGHT: Towards the back (Southern) side of the site, there was a lot more evidence of building works and the site had been divided up into distinct working area using our favourite fencing. we weren't sure about any evidence of restoration work, but the presence of builders equipment suggests that Southlands might not be around a whole lot longer...

The Boiler House.



ABOVE: Water pressure and water level gauges.

BELOW: The boilers. The floors here were incredibly slippery - it is quite warm in here and the pigeons love it.

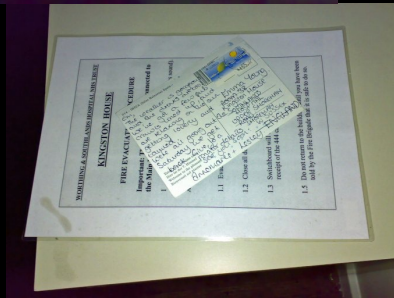


Student / Nurse's Accomodation.



ABOVE: At the extreme south-eastern corner of the site is this 1970's block. At first glance it looks completely impenetrable, but we've learnt the hard way that sometimes the only way in is the way you're meant to go in!

BELOW: Agent Skyframe takes a few minutes to recuperate - it was quite cold and very damp on site. The lights are the reflective areas on his jacket picking up the flash.





ABOVE: We are undecided on this: either the rooms in here were vacated in a real hurry or they have been squatted and cleared out. Either way, it was interesting to see little glimpses of life in this place.

BELOW: This block looked quite interesting, but was extremely well locked up and no visible way in. We'd covered 95% of the site and that ain't bad.





[GO TO THE FORUM](#)



[SIGN THE GUESTBOOK](#)