

Transcripts

Farnborough Padded Cell
Medicine: The Wellcome Galleries

Section 1: Pocock Brothers

Specialists in Padded Rooms and Requisite Equipments for Mental Hospitals.

The Padded room is made of seamless rubber cloth. The floor is laid in one piece. It has an aluminium gutter by which the excretion and water used for washing and flushing is carried away. The gutter is not affected by uric or other acids.

Size – as required.

Section 2: David Smith

David: Well, the floor and the ceiling was padded and the wall, the walls were padded but there was a window at the top, you couldn't reach probably, and... and that was fresh air coming in. And it was a... about autumn I think and it was cool enough but, oh it was all right.

Interviewer: And why did you get put in a padded cell?

You went home without asking?

D: I don't know, I don't remember. I remember somebody picking up from my mother's in a car, and taking me back to ward Twos, and putting me in a padded cell for that.

I: And what sort of thing did you wear in the padded cell, did you...?

D: Nothing.

I: Nothing at all?

D: Nothing at all.

Section 3: Rules for the guidance of the Nurses, Attendants, & Servants.

Rule 47

By seclusion is meant confining a Patient to a room between the hours of 7am and 7pm, and by locking, securing or holding the door in any way, preventing him from leaving it. If a patient becomes so excited and violent that it is manifestly necessary to seclude him, the Head Attendant or Matron and one of the Medical Officers must be immediately informed.

Section 4: Joan Tugwell

Joan: Only once I was put in the padded cell. It was awful being in the padded cell because everything's padded, all the floors, the door was padded, so nobody couldn't hear you, so you couldn't knock anywhere because they couldn't hear you. They had a little spy hole on the door, which they would look in to see if you was alright now and again

Interviewer: Right... What had you done to be put in the padded cell?

J: I don't know what I'd done...
I'd done something...

I: Right...

J: I don't know what it was I'd done...

Section 5: The seclusion of a patient shall be recorded every week in the register of mechanical restraint and seclusion.

February 1st, Mr Radcliffe, Padded Room, 4 hours, Very Irritable

May 16th, Mrs Wright, Padded Room, 2 days, Extreme violence

May 27th, Mrs Taylor, Padded Room, Eleven Days, Acute Mania

September 30th, Mrs Taylor, Padded Room as bedroom, 4 days, Noisy and restless.

October 14th, Mr Gillison, Padded Room, 3 days, Noisy, violent and destructive.

November 3rd, Mr Graham, Padded Room, 5 hours, Violent and noisy.

November 8th, Miss Brown, Padded Room, 4 hours, Excitement and Violence.

December 7th, Mr Larkworthy, Padded Room, 3 hours, Violent and aggressive.

Section 6: Anne Sopitt

Anne

Yes, it was in Farnborough that I first experienced a padded cell...

They're... padded like... the jeans stuff you wear... but... really, really thick. You know like vinyl? ... Like that, but... you know padded... they look padded, like vinyl, and there's no window in there or anything, it's just a room with a... a minute little light, and there's this thick... thick, thick wall. I should think the door was that thick... and you're locked in, and that's it...

I was locked in for eight days and eight nights, just being fed... through the pigeonhole, with bread and water...

I was locked in because I asked for a cup of milk, when I was admitted, and because I didn't get that cup of milk, I put my mattress up against the door, and eight warders came and got me... men... and put me in a padded cell and there I stayed.

Section 7: The Mental Treatment Regulations

Mechanical restraint or seclusion shall not be used except by the order of a medical officer or of the medical practitioner in charge of the case, or the medical attendant, who shall sign the corresponding record in the Register of Mechanical Restraint and Seclusion.

Section 8: Virginia Moore

Virginia

They still had padded cells in the old building which I was put in for being naughty, not that I minded, but they did have them there.

I can visualise it now.

Just the once I was being particularly naughty and ... they just put me in and it was ... absolutely white, and it was great big thick padding on the ceiling and the walls, it was quite high up the floor. It was quite comfortable, I think I just fell asleep to be honest. Oh it was quite a big room, it was, it was probably ... you know, I can't think of how many yards, but it was a fair size, it was bigger than an ordinary kitchen, bathroom or kitchen, you know ... and you were just locked in, you know?

It was cotton, it was white cotton, it was all padded, you know, all pumfey, you know.

And there was a little hole in the, in the, in the door, for them to come and look at you. It wasn't a bed, it was just white padding you were just supposed to lie on that, you know."

Section 9

The great advantage of a padded room in all these cases, is that it renders both mechanical restraints and muscular force unnecessary for the control of even the most violent patients.

The padding extending from the floor to a height above the ordinary reach of a patient. The whole floor of the room is padded also, or covered with a thick mattress, of the same material as the padded walls, so that it makes a complete bed.

In a room so arranged the patient cannot easily injure himself or receive accidental injury.

Section 10: John Hart

John

They had a padded cell in Haughton and I was in there once or twice, and I don't remember why, I don't remember why at all. I know I wasn't violent, it wasn't because I was violent...

Well I quite enjoyed it really, I mean I, because I was quite involved in kind of meditating and being peaceful sometimes and in this padded cell, it was the perfect place to meditate actually, no distractions whatsoever, you know, you can't hear anything, you can't touch anything, you can't see anything, so it's very good. And I am, I, after that, after they put me in there, I used to ask if I could go in there and they'd say no I couldn't, no they wouldn't let me when I wanted to".

Section 10: Mike Melson

Mike

If you were naughty you were put in the box, just a pair of underpants and a mattress on the floor and

a plastic potty and that was your lot. They'd let you out once a day. You could rant and rave as much as that, they couldn't hear you. It was blooming awful.

I was put in there over the years, about four or five times for my own protection because I tried to commit suicide and they thought 'Oh he's a danger to himself, put him in the box' as we used to call it ... and in the box I would go ... and you wouldn't be

put in nicely, you'd be manhandled in and the more resistance you put up the more they ... manhandle you into the box. They'd just lock you up and that

was it and you got ... a meal if you were lucky, on a paper plate with a plastic spoon and that was

your lot and a paper cup with a drink of water ...
three times a day.

The padded cells: a mattress on the floor, no
bedding, just a mattress and a plastic potty, that was
your lot. They'd put you in there, forget about you.

Section 11: Casebook of Male Admissions

Mr S, Age 19, Occupation: Apprentice iron merchant

6th May: Mr S. smashed 12 panes of glass in one of the windows today. He showed no excitement, saying merely that he wishes to get out. He was kept in the padded room for the rest of the day and put on short rations. He tore his underclothing to ribbons and the straitjacket was applied. This seemed to cow him completely.

7th May: Mr S. is very meek this morning.

8th May: Mr S. spent last night in the padded room but was quite quiet. He promised not to misbehave again.

Section 12: Nicky Nicholls

Nicky ...and when I woke up I was in a padded cell on my own, alone... couldn't hear anything, and the whole thing was padded and it was just unreal, you know.

Interviewer: Was there any furniture in the room?

Nicky: Nothing, there was just pads on the walls, on the floor, totally padded cell with a gutter running sort of round the edges, and like the-the door, was like a prison door...

...most of the time just left all day on your own, just wondering what was happening and you keep dosing in and out of sleep because you were so doped up with drugs and it didn't really matter in the end, you didn't know if it was night or day or what.

After the padded cell, there was one nurse called Maurine that actually complained about how long I'd been in there, and apparently I'd been in seven days... which is quite a long time, and then she said, she told me she'd made a complaint and she brought me some drawing paper and an apple... and she was really nice, I'll never forget her.

