Philomena Guillebaud. Published by Fern House Publishing, Cambridge, UK, 2012. £14.50. ISBN 978-1-902702-293-2

The distinctive outline of the Cambridge University Library is probably as emblematic of Cambridge academic life as King's College Chapel or the Mathematical Bridge at Queens' College. However, I suspect few people today give thought to what was present before the library was built (in the 1930s) and those that do probably assume (not unreasonably) that it was built on college sports fields or other college land. They would not be wrong, but the transition was not seamless. This book provides an account of what intervened. There are two parts to the book; the first, which will be of interest to the military medical historian, is the account of the First Eastern General Hospital (Territorial Force) and how it evolved. Its very existence reflects World War I contingency planning and the medical practices, both conventional and esoteric, of the era. The second part of the book will be of more interest to the social historian. It describes the re-rolling of the hospital buildings for use as social housing in the post-war years and ultimately the relocation of a number of units to villages in the surrounding area for use as communal halls, barns or storage. The remodelled remnants of some are still visible today.

This short book is an interesting read and has given me a new perspective on West Cambridge and the University Library site, as well as highlighting the vagaries of medical contingency planning.

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**From Bats to Beds to Books.
The First Eastern General
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